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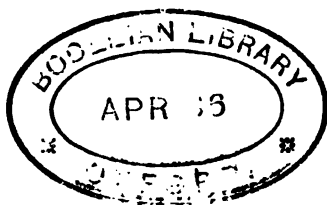


HOME CHIMES.

EDITED BY

F. W. ROBINSON.

VOLUME THE SECOND.



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IN BAD HANDS.
A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON,
Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Lazarus in
London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE LODGERS AT BROADBROOK'S.

MARSH WALK, in the heart of busy Lambeth, was at the time of which my story treats, one of the most bustling, struggling, fighting and tearing thoroughfares, of the many crowded highways of human life which are to be discovered in South London. The Marsh Walk was always busy; it was a place in which no grass grew under the feet of its inhabitants. It was a squalid place altogether in its way, and they were very poor, "hand to mouth" folk, who thronged its streets, and haggled for prices at the butchers' shops, and begged for credit "till next Saturday night, sir,—oh! only till next Saturday!"—of the stern man behind the counter, who was selling at the lowest prices the harshest and most almy of bread, and striving hard himself to live, and failing very often.

Marsh Walk was the highway of the "poorest poor"—and the shopkeepers, were, as a rule, very poor too, to match their customers. Names were always changing over the shop-fronts in Marsh Walk, and only the publicans and pawnbrokers were "old established" and waxed fat on people's thirst or people's troubles.

One of the poorest shops in this neighbourhood to which we direct our reader's attention, was Mr. Broadbrook's—and it was always a matter of grave speculation, how Mr. Broadbrook lived and kept house and home together on "easy shaving at a half-penny" and "gents and ladies hair cut at three-pence," or, cut and curled for the sum of four-pence, paid in advance, to save unnecessary disputes, or the fatigue of opening credit accounts.

But Mr. Broadbrook *did* live, and keep house somehow, and supported, or endeavoured to support, a grimy, and carrot-haired Mrs. Broadbrook and nine small Broadbrook's, all grimmer and more carroty than their mother, and whose hair was never cut and curled, and was altogether a reflection on the parent male, a dreamy little man, who passed the greater part of the day in his shirt sleeves, at his open door, with a comb behind his ear, and the handles of several scissors sticking out of the all round pocket of his dirty white apron, like a buccaneer armed to the teeth.

Certainly, Mr. Broadbrook had lodgers, and *when* they paid their way "fair and square," that was a something off the rent, and made up for a paucity of customers. And it is of these lodgers we have to speak; just as the inhabitants of Marsh Walk—especially those living over the way—had spoken, and wondered, and speculated about them for the last two years, and made artful attempts to "draw out" Broadbrook, who was not to be drawn out, for the very sapient reason that there was nothing to draw, and the barber was as ignorant as his neighbours.

The lodgers then who rented the small first floor of Mr. Broadbrook, were a woman of some forty years of age, and a boy of eleven or twelve; the woman a pale, washed out, fragile being with "not an ounce of strength in her," Mr. Broadbrook said, and said very near the truth, the boy also fragile, and white as a ghost, with two grey eyes which were several sizes too large for the thin, small face they lighted up so strangely. A quiet pair of lodgers who gave little or no trouble, who had brought their own furniture to the first floor of Mr. Broadbrook's, and settled there for good, paying "pretty tidy middling" take them the year round, was the verdict of the hairdresser.

No one was expected to pay punctually in Marsh Walk such an out-of-the-way luxury as the rent; Mr. Broadbrook seldom paid his own rent till the brokers were in, when he dunned Mrs. Wharton for arrears and sold something on his own account to make up *his* quarter. Leave Mr.

Broadbrook alone, and he left other people alone, being an easy going person, as was Mrs. Broadbrook, and as are most poor people with large families, we fancy. If they were not, they would die despairing of the better days, and under the grim surroundings of their lives—as some reckless souls do die in the big city, after all, and glad to get out of it too!

Mrs. Wharton was glad to live and take care of her nephew Phil—though she had not much to be glad about, and it may be said, at first start, that Phil took care of her. There had been times when this was different, but now the position had changed, and one good turn had deserved, and brought about another, as it should do, and as it will do occasionally.

Mrs. Wharton was an invalid, at the period our story opens, one who had almost lost the use of her limbs some time after her arrival at Marsh Walk, and so had been unable to do as much for Phil as she had bargained for when she had taken upon herself his sole care and custody.

"What did you do that for?" asked Mrs. Broadbrook, who was by nature more curious than her husband.

"There was no one else to take care of him."

"Why not?"

"Well," was the slow, reflective response, as if such a question took a lot of time to answer, "because there wasn't, don't you see."

Mrs. Broadbrook did not see, but she thought she did.

"An orphan! poor little chap is he? Ah! that's hard."

"I didn't say he was an orphan."

"Bad mother, perhaps—or a father who drinks," she suggested without eliciting a response, and adding by way of encouragement to confide in her—"Broadbrook drinks, if he ain't busy, and its astonishing what a little gets into his head."

"I dare say it does," was Mrs. Wharton's broken answer, "but Phil has not a mother."

"Oh, I see! that's why you take care of him—whilst the father's away, I suppose?"

"Yes," she said, "whilst the father's away—that's it."

This was not strikingly explicit, but it was all the facts that could be elicited from Mrs. Wharton. And as the father seemed always away, and never came to see his son, or sister-in-law, and never wrote a line to either, Mrs. Wharton had no correspondents whatever. The Broadbrooks and the little circle of hard-workers round about the Broadbrooks were left to guess at the facts, or give them up. The missing Mr. Wharton might be abroad, on foreign service, in the army, or in gaol, or might even have a nice little light-house to mind somewhere—there was no telling where he was from Mrs. Wharton's comments on the subject, and the boy Philip was as reticent as his aunt.

The Whartons paid their way tolerably fairly for a while, and Philip went to school in the neighbourhood, and was considered by his contemporaries, a quiet, milksop sort of youth, who stood a lot before he was "riled," and then let out a bit and had his say and held his own on his little battle field of life, weak and sickly as he was. Mrs. Wharton was an artist in wool, which article during the first year of her residence in Marsh Walk, she was

incessantly knitting and crotcheting into all kinds of soft goods that were made into a big parcel once a fortnight, and sent off to a wholesale house near St. Paul's Churchyard. And it was out of this wool work, that her nephew Philip was supported, for when rheumatic fever seized her, and it was found after a tedious recovery that the use of her hands had not come back to her, the woman and child were in sore straits enough, and had to throw themselves on the mercy of Mr. Broadbrook, who, always in a chronic state of debt and difficulty himself, was not greatly shocked, and said, "Don't trouble," in quite a sympathizing way, and "when they begin to bother me, why I must bother you, and not before. That's all." And that was quite enough; for the water rate was down upon him the next week, and the gasman, accompanied by a myrmidon in corduroys, cut off and carried away the meter the week following, and left Samuel Broadbrook to paraffin lamps and candle dips till the question of arrears was finally adjusted. And they were adjusted by Mrs. Wharton's aid, and by the sale of something or other out of Mrs. Wharton's big box with brass nails—and Philip always noticed that when times were very hard, and the people in them harder, Mrs. Wharton dived into the big box, and fished therefrom something or other that fetched money at the pawnbroker's. Hence there was treasure trove in the corner of her little back bedroom, and it never wholly failed them. It was to Philip's mind, an inexhaustible well-spring, till one day there was nothing more to sell she said, and this at the time when Samuel Broadbrook had the shadow of his landlord's last quarter falling once more across his chequered career like a big black smudge.

It was at this period, that our little hero woke up.

"I think I can earn money now," said Phil very thoughtfully one day.

"Not yet, my poor boy," said his Aunt, shaking her rusty cap at him, "it isn't likely yet."

"I'm sure I can earn money," he exclaimed, with a vehemence which scared Mrs. Wharton and took her breath away, her nerves never having been properly under her personal control. "You see if I can't."

Mrs. Wharton waited patiently, and did see within four and twenty hours, when Philip Wharton marched in doors with a golden sovereign in his hand and laid it triumphantly upon the table.

"There, Auntie," he said "how about that?"

"Good gracious, Phil, you must have stolen it," exclaimed the old lady, beginning to tremble like a blanc-mange, "oh! what have you done?"

"Earned it."

"Earned a sovereign! You could not, Phil, it is not possible."

"Well, I'm going to earn it," he explained, "I begged for this on account, because you weren't well enough to do any work just yet, I said, and we were behindhand with the rent, and getting hungry. And the gentleman said 'I don't believe in boys, but I'll trust you for once,' and gave me that out of his pocket, and—just like a gentleman, that was, wasn't it?"

"Very much like a kind-hearted gentleman, indeed, if—"

"Here, I'll tell you all about it. They've been

talking about my voice, oh, for ever so long, at school, and pushing me forward in singing, and I heard old Prouts—that's our singing master—say "That boy's got a soprano voice that's worth something," and then the choir master and organist of a church over Westminster way, came and heard me, a week or two back and said 'what a pity it was I hadn't been better trained,' and made Prouts awful waxy, and then—are you listening, Auntie, or going to sleep?"

"I'm listening to every word you say, but you rattle on so fast, my head's going round and round, Phil," she said, "and I don't see——"

"Why, how can you see, when you shut your eyes, Aunt Bella," he cried.

"Sharp as his father," muttered Mrs. Wharton, "well, go on, who gave you that sovereign?"

"Why, the gentleman at Westminster—the choir-master of St. Eustace's Church,—and he's going to train me and put me in his choir as soon as he can, and I am to have twenty pounds a year to begin with. There!"

"Twenty pounds! and at your age!" exclaimed his aunt. "Gracious."

"And perhaps thirty, though he doesn't promise that. I walked straight to his house to-day, found him, settled the business," said this small boy with grave self-confidence, "and I only wish I'd done it before, when I was a young one."

Thus it was that Master Philip Wharton became a boy soprano at St. Eustace's Church, Westminster, and being a quick boy, with a voice as clear as a bell, he dropped into a salary that was remarkable considering his years, and became the mainstay, the prop and support as it were of the feeble woman struck down before her time, whose one grief was that she was of so little help to him, assuaged by the one comfort perhaps that he was of great help to her, and gave that help with all the warmth of his ungrudging little heart.

And so from eleven years of age to twelve, did Philip Wharton remain at St. Eustace's and become of grave importance to the choir, and progressed in musical knowledge, under the efficient training he received and was somewhat a wonder of a boy soprano to be jealously guarded from other choirs and choirmasters who would have snapped him up and carried him away perforce. For choirs are like the myriads in the water drop, and prey on one another. Philip was not elated at his success, and indeed hardly knew he was successful. No one spoiled him by flattery, and the choir-master, an irritable old gentleman who meant well, but was always finding fault, told him regularly twice a week that he could not sing a bit, and was not worth his salt. The boys were not pleasant company to Phil either, being bigger and stronger than he, and invariably disposed to make game of him when they were not knocking him about, and his only friend was the young organist, Folkestone Miles by name—christened Folkestone by an admiring mother, because he was born in Dover—and a sandy-haired, limp young man by nature he was, who carried his hat on the back of his head, and wore violet-coloured glasses, which were always askew, on the bridge of a long, thin nose. He was a hard-working young man, paid sparsely for his duties at the rate of forty pounds per annum, and looking through his spectacles vaguely for extra pupils to make a living for him. He lived or lodged in Hercules Buildings, Lambeth,

and Philip Wharton, being a little fellow, with a long way to go from Westminster in the same direction, often trotted by the side of the organist, who was not too proud to have him for a companion, and to ask him many questions, and to be generally interested in this quiet boy who had much less to say for himself than most choir boys have as a rule.

He was an eccentric young man this Folkestone Miles, and perhaps as curious as the folk in the Marsh Walk, for the isolation of the lad, his self-dependence at so early an age, the self restraint or reticence, which was characteristic of him, all aroused the organist's interest and sympathy.

"That boy's a queer customer," he said to himself more than once. "I'll draw him out." And instead of this, it was Master Philip Wharton who drew out Mr. Folkestone Miles, one sultry August evening when they were crossing Westminster Bridge together.

"Have you lived in Lambeth all your life, Phil?" Mr. Miles asked, as they walked on side by side.

"No—have you, sir?" answered the quiet lad.

"Yes,—almost all my life. My father and my mother died in Lambeth."

"Did they though?"

"Your father and mother are dead too, Phil, I suppose?"

"Mother is—long ago."

"Don't you remember your mother then?"

"Oh, yes."

"And what's your father?"

"I don't know what aunt calls father. Your father was an organist, too, wasn't he, sir?"

"Yes—that's it. Who told you?"

"I have heard you say so before. He was at the same church years ago, you told me once."

"Did I," said this absent young man, "very likely I did—I don't remember."

"Wasn't he very clever at the organ?"

"He was a great musician," said Folkestone Miles, who would always grow enthusiastic over his father's accomplishments, "he composed a fugue that should have made his fortune, but it did not. And there's an oratorio in a drawer at home—such a manuscript! If it had only been played anywhere, Phil, I should have been in a different position by this time, but you can't sell oratorios just when you're so disposed. Very few people want to buy oratorios," he added, "and nobody wants to hear them."

"What a pity!" said Phil.

"I have been composing a little myself—but but there, you don't want to know what I've done, and it isn't worth while," he said, "only I've done no good Phil, and that's my luck always," he added, with a pleasant laugh at his own misfortunes.

"Are you very unlucky, Mr. Miles?"

"To be sure I am, but it can't be helped."

"I wish I had forty pounds a year, I shouldn't think I was unlucky," remarked Master Phil, with great deliberation.

"Why, you cheeky young rascal, what would you do with it?"

"Help Aunt more. Help poor old Broadbrook."

"And help yourself," suggested the organist.

"No, I wasn't thinking of myself," said Phil, "good night, sir."

"Good night, Phil, good night. Be early Sunday morning, or you'll have the choir-master

down on you. He said you were very late to-night. And you mustn't offend him."

"Did he say that?" said Phil, "yes, I *was* late. But I couldn't help it."

"One can always help being late."

"Not always," replied the boy, deliberately, and very gravely.

"Why not?"

"Not when anyone's ill, and wants a doctor."

"Who's ill where you live?"

"My aunt."

"Why you haven't said anything about it," said the amazed organist. "You didn't tell Mr. Holloboys that that was the reason?"

"No. I didn't want to talk of it. Good night, sir," and Phil, with his hymn book under his arm, and his hands in his trousers pockets, walked slowly and thoughtfully away, looking more like a little old man, than the boy of twelve that he really was.

The organist glanced after him curiously, stood on the kerb-stone of his native street, and watched him through his violet glasses, instead of letting himself into the house with his latch-key, and proceeding to his bachelor quarters in the second-floor back. He grew almost uneasy about the lad; the lad's grave manner that night puzzled him, and suddenly he made a dash after him, and overtook him as he was turning into Lambeth Road.

"Here, Phil," he said, as he came up with him again, to the boy's astonishment, "can I be of any use in any way? You're down to-night, and if there's anything I can do, you know—"

"Thank you, Mr. Miles. It's very kind of you," he answered, looking up very steadily with his great grey eyes at the speaker; "but no, you can't be of any use to her."

"Is she so very ill, then?"

"I don't know. I couldn't wait to hear what the doctor said."

"Do you think she's very ill?"

"She's different like—to me," he answered.

"Isn't there any one to write to?"

"Oh, no."

"Nobody?"

"Nobody."

"Shall I come home with you?"

"What's the use, sir?"

"Well, I don't know," confessed Mr. Miles; "but if you should find out in any way that I *can* be of use, why, you know where I live."

The boy nodded, and murmured something that was intended for thanks, but which would not come further than a brand new bung which had suddenly risen up in his throat, and arrested further powers of speech.

With the consciousness that he was rather in the way, Mr. Folkestone Miles turned back, wondering at the boy, wondering a little more what would become of this quiet youth if the aunt were to die, and leave that twelve-year old to begin life entirely on his own account. He wondered at a little more than that, too—why he should be interested in him in any way—having had some years' experience of choir-boys, and being disposed to consider them, upon the whole, as hideous and irreverent tormentors, prepared for any mischief when his back, or Mr. Holloboys's back, was turned, and doing a very fair amount of it on practice nights, before his very face.

"But this is such an odd sort of boy," he muttered, "a boy who keeps himself to himself. A boy I don't make out, at all, a boy who—oh! bother the boy."

And he stepped out double quick time towards home, resolved to mind his own business, and to brush and do himself up sprucely for a late visit to a pupil—a brush manufacturer's daughter in the Westminster Road, who served in the shop, and had only time for the accomplishments after nine o'clock in the evening, when her father, a rough old savage, sat and smoked opposite master and pupil, and made crude and scoffing comments upon his daughters five finger exercises. But though of limited musical intelligence, she was a pretty, amiable girl, and Folkestone Miles thought a great deal about her, and only wished his receipts were five hundred pounds a year instead of about fifty-eight, take them altogether, and then—Oh! then.

Still it was not nine o'clock, it wanted a quarter to nine, when he was outside in the Hercules Buildings again, with a sprig of red geranium—his own culture from a sooty plant which was perched on his window-sill—in his left hand top button hole, and the boy he had left suddenly rose to his mind again like a ghost not to be exercised too readily.

"I'll just go into the Marsh Walk and see if its all right at Broadbrook's. If—if the shutters are down, and the blinds are up, poor little chap," he muttered, and away he went once more in the direction of Phil Wharton's lodgings, a being possessed with one idea.

Yes, it was all right, and Folkestone Miles's spirits went up seventy five per cent. for no reason that could be accounted for, or that he, callous being as he thought himself, was likely to own. There was Mr. Broadbrook at the door, serene and smiling and red-headed and hot, with a girdle of bright scissor handles glistening all round his fairly plump waist; there were three little red-headed Broadbrooks who should have been in bed hours ago, tumbling about the shop, and playing with two razors and half-a-dozen balls of sand soap left promiscuously on the floor, and there were the blinds of the first floor still drawn up to admit into the room all that was left of the twilight lingering in Marsh Walk.

"That's all right," thought Mr. Miles again as he walked away. But it was not all right, or hardly as right as it might have been.

For if Mr. Folkestone Miles had not been short-sighted, or had his weak vision been unobscured by violet glass which had grown terribly steamy and dull that close evening, he would have recognized, and been surprised to recognize, a burly, high-shouldered, broad-faced, black-muzzled man, who had asked him in Westminster the way to Charing Cross, who had thanked him surlily for the information, and then marched off in a different direction to that which he had been told, who had hung about the church and listened to the choir practice going on within, who had put his head through the doors to listen more attentively, and to peer more closely into the shadowy edifice, who had followed step by step the organist and the boy from Westminster to Lambeth, and who was leaning against the lamp-post at the corner of the street opposite, ostensibly a street figure that was very streety, and was watching furtively from his bloated and blood-shot eyes, as

wolves and foxes watch, the windows over the barber's shop or something beyond the windows of the room in which Phil Wharton and his aunt were sitting.

Aunt and little Phil were as unconscious of the man without, as Folkestone Miles had been. They would as soon have believed in one risen from the dead, as in his coming back; and they would have been less scared at the opening of the grave, and the white figure in its cere-cloth, than at encountering face to face that dreadful man again.

(To be continued.)

FAME.

THE creeping moss caresses and conceals
The name engraven on the rugged stone:
A name forgotten now. The iron wheels
Of Time, with dull vibration, drown the tone,
Alike of praise and blame; and he alone
Is wise who builds upon securer ground
Than popular approval, which is shown
Inconstant as a harlot—lightly bound,
And with a fading wreath of short-lived lustre
crowned.

Yet once men gave him high and frequent praise,
As orator and sage, whose piercing mind
Could penetrate the mud-begotten haze
Of prejudice and bigotry combined;
Which wraps the earth, wherein the weak and
blind,

Who deem they have to lofty heights achieved,
Babble of sunlight with no hope to find
A clue to thread the maze; but he conceived
High ends, and in a nobler destiny believed.

In the bright legends of our childish lore
'Tis written that a princess, fair and young,
Was visited by kindly sprites, who bore
Rare gifts from Nature's secret gardens sprung.
Over her sleeping form the fairies hung,
And on her innocence their charms they pressed,
Dewdrop and violet they lightly flung,
And left their jewels flashing on her breast;
But one dark gift was there which blighted all
the rest.

'Twas so with him—God gave with lavish hand,
The attributes for which the dreamers long.
That he 'midst weaker men might boldly stand
Like the old heroes of a minstrel song,
In every faculty of manhood strong.
He heard the faintest whisper of distress,
He worshipped honour and he hated wrong;
He sought for grief a chivalrous redress,
But ever aimed too high to gain the world's
success.

Heaven treasures all such souls, but earth is cold
To those who will not teach her cherished creeds,
Nor can the moral infamy be told,
Which dares to pray without the aid of beads.
It mattered nothing that his words and deeds
Were noble, pure, and daring from the first,
They clearly sprang from unacknowledged seeds;
And so a storm of indignation burst;
For he who tramples faction is for ever curst.

He laboured hard for misery and want,
And sought to soften their unkindly fate,
But would not hold the universal cant,
Whose gospel is the plunder of the great,

As solace for the poor—to rend the State
And call destruction progress. Only those
Achieve enduring work who learn to wait.
O'er lighter effort swift reaction flows,
And error undestroyed to coarser verdure grows.

He revered the wise who nobly wrought
In former ages for the common good,
But never strove to check the course of thought,
As others did, in dull obstructive mood.
Discrimination falsely understood
Is counted indecision: and the crowd,
Of self created censors weak and crude,—
Called him an egotist, austere and proud,
And silenced all defence by clamour wild and loud.

When enterprise was young—before the strife
Polemical had brought its base defeat—
In the glad Maytime of a poet's life,
He won a maiden's heart, so pure and sweet,
Life's broken circle grew a ring complete,
Wreathing a sacred legend passing fair,
As starry nights on which they used to meet;
Nought seemed too hard to conquer or to dare,
And life was golden as her bright and flowing
hair.

Love is life's inner meaning; so the wise
Are tender to the dream of azure hue,
Which seems to bear its likeness, as the skies
Are mirrored in a river flowing blue
And sunny through the valleys; but the true
Heart-worship is so strangely fraught with pain;
Its secrets are initiate to few:
Death enters Paradise with stern disdain,
To trample budding flowers and blight the waving
grain.

In the first freshness of her youth and grace,
And glowing loveliness, the maiden died,
Ere her young heart was tainted by the trace
Of disenchanted hope or wounded pride.
A heavy shadow blurred the landscape wide;
O'er all life's objects rolled a sullen wave;
But selfish sorrow is to man denied,
And his brave heart no indication gave
That all its fairest hopes lay buried in her grave.

The garrulous old world repeats the tales
She studied in her childhood—love and fame;
One gains her laurels while another fails,
A third obtains what seems a lasting name,
Which after ages alter into shame.
God will divide the gold from burnished dross,
And write the truth in characters of flame;
But life on earth is imaged by the Cross,
And men give but a name half hid by verdant
moss.

ALFRED LEIGH.

WHY I ABANDONED TRAGEDY.

BY J. FITZGERALD MOLLOY,

Author of "Court Life Below Stairs," "The Life and
Adventures of Peg Woffington," &c.

THERE is not usually much inspiration to be
had in the much-abused, but most convenient
district, of Bloomsbury. Probably the Muses
Nine, who are wise young persons in their
way, object to a Bloomsbury lodging, especially
when the walls of that abode are covered with a
paper from which all traces of design and colour
have long since faded; when its ceiling boasts as

many cracks as a counterfeit old master, and when the view from its windows presents but a cheerless back view of houses in a neighbouring street, whose monotonous appearance is relieved only by odd flower-pots in various stages of decay, a few blank windows, and a couple of disreputable-looking water-butts.

Yet it was in such a room, commanding such a prospect (which even the most optimistic of house-agents could not call agreeable) that the inspiration came to me which, acted upon, realized the dream of my boyhood, the hope of my manhood, and the expectations of my tailor. This inspiration came to me in the form of—but you shall hear.

I wrote myself down in the census-paper a man of letters: I am called by my friends a scribbler (it being one of the delightful privileges of friendship to style a man by the least possible flattering appellation), and I am known to the world as a dramatic author.

For years I had cherished an ambition in my soul of writing a tragedy—a great tragedy—as ghastly in its situations as ever lime-light shone upon; as terribly realistic as anything Zola ever conceived; as weirdly powerful as any romance Victor Hugo ever penned; and containing withal that one touch of nature which would make vast audiences (including the galleries) kin with the author.

Such a work as this, it will be readily admitted, required profound thought. So I kept thinking for years, and meanwhile wrote jokes and funniosities for the comic papers—a form of literary work which, though demoralizing to the general tone of a gifted mind, pays. My puns served as pot-boilers; my pen-and-ink squibs, dashed off when and where I could, bought refreshments for myself and my thirsty friends—Bohemians are always thirsty.

When engaged in the composition of my great dramatic work, I had no debasing thoughts concerning the money it would probably bring me. Tragedy scorns above pence. No doubt when Fame crowned my labours gold would pour in upon me (observe, it always pours) unsought, if not, indeed, unreckoned. Meanwhile, I had youth, and patience, and, alas! a keen appetite. But I held it as a great first principle that genius meets with recognition sooner or later, and I was prepared to struggle nobly, manfully, with Fate for fame.

I had once heard that 'twas sublime to suffer and be strong. I was strong, and I suffered occasionally from adverse literary judgment. For instance, I remember as well as if it happened but yesterday, the hour in which I took my two-act drama down to the manager of the Ophelia Theatre. He promised to read it for me the first moment he had to spare: that moment was in the womb of time, and I believe yet continues there. Three months later I met him in Fleet Street. He is a prosperous-looking man, with a paunch and a heavy gold chain, ending in a bunch of miniature models of household furniture, wrought in some glittering metal. He clapped his fat hand heavily on my left shoulder to emphasize his expressions of delight at our encounter, and taking my arm, he unconsciously directed his steps towards the Gaiety bar. When we had arrived there, and he was engaged in the consummation (devotely to

be wished for) of a glass of brandy-and-water which I had ordered, I seized that opportune moment to remind him of my two-act drama.

He placed his half-emptied glass on the counter, and surveyed it with a look of unspeakable wisdom in one eye; the other he slowly closed—not that he winked, but rather that the full force of expression might be concentrated in his uncovered pupil.

"My boy," quoth he, "I've read it hall (one of his peculiarities was that he dropped the eighth letter of the alphabet from some words, and stuck it on to others in the most eccentric way), an' I can tell you it's deuced clever—clever is the word, my boy; but take a friend's advice, old man, and make it one hact, and you'll have a capital farce. That's just what I say, an' I know something about the stage by this time. I wasn't born yesterday, you know."

I changed the conversation immediately, took my two-act drama from him, and carried it straight to the Forum Theatre. Here, at least, I thought, I was sure to meet with appreciation—that oil which feeds the lamp of genius. The opinion of the worthy manager of the Forum was more reassuring, though his advice was widely at variance with that of the fat man whose judgment rules supreme at the Ophelia.

"Lengthen your drama by an act, my dear sir," said he of the Forum. "Kill your hero, and you will produce a great tragedy."

Though suffering keen disappointment, I smiled; it is always best to dissemble. I thanked the manager for his advice, and took my departure from his presence, wondering a little at the seeming elasticity of my drama, which, by the addition or the curtailing of a single act from its present proportions, could be converted into a tragedy or a farce. I decided in favour of tragedy; and hastened back to Bloomsbury to alter my play. But in reading it over I had not the heart to destroy my former work by erasing many of my pet phrases, nor the courage to murder the hero I had happily married and left in a state of bliss, holding the hands of his wife and his demoniac, but penitent mother-in-law, as he bowed at the fall of the curtain.

Then the idea occurred to me that perhaps I had better leave it untouched, and write an original tragedy, that might render me famous in one night. Oh! thought intoxicating. To be a successful dramatist; to be called by an enthusiastic first-night audience before the footlights to receive an ovation—the mere idea was transport. In hot haste I bought some reams of paper, a dozen of the largest quills I could find, and then sat down to my work. This was in the commencement of September; by November I hoped to have completed my tragedy. How the fates ordained that it should be otherwise, you shall speedily learn.

The first day I set to work by drawing a rough sketch of my plot; I then made a judicious selection of the ten commandments which my villain was destined to smash to atoms, and limited the number of murders to be perpetrated to a round half-dozen. Then came the dialogue. After five hours devoted to the composition of eloquent blank verse, I rose from my chair, not wearied, though thought had been busy with my brain, but yet anxious to get out of doors. I felt as if the walls

of my sitting room oppressed me; my expanded mind had grown too large for the place, I must let my imagination soar untrammelled up to heaven itself. For this laudable purpose I went for a walk round one of the neighbouring squares, where the yellow leaves just beginning to fall from the trees lay in the mud below, and where the sound of an asthmatic organ, dreadfully out of tune, played a German valse and the Old Hundred psalm.

When the clock of St. Pancras's church struck seven, I turned homewards. The thought of dining was in itself repulsive to a highly gifted nature, but food was unfortunately necessary to sustain strength, both mental and physical. So I would eat to live. I let myself in with my latch-key, and went upstairs quietly. As I reached the first landing I heard a quick pattering of feet on the worn stair carpet, and a merry voice singing a popular ditty.

Oh, why don't you love me?
Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la.

And in another second I was conscious that someone dashed up against me and knocked off my hat. I did the most natural thing in life. I put my arms round the obstacle which had nearly knocked me down; that obstacle was a female form.

"I—I beg your pardon," I stammered, removing my arms—slowly, it must be confessed.

"Oh, how you frightened me," said a voice belonging to that female form, which I saw at a glance was divine.

"I am sorry——"

"Well, never mind now, pick up your hat or I may walk on it," she said quickly, and as I thought with a touch of humour in her tone (my ears are exquisitely sensitive to the sound of humour vented at my personal expense). I looked up to see if my supposition was correct, but forgot the purpose for which I lifted my eyes when I caught a glance of the face pertaining to the aforementioned female form divine. Her nose was certainly upturned, there could be no second thoughts about that; her mouth was small and well cut, with a saucy expression playing about the lips; her eyes were brown and bright and merry; her complexion had a creamy foreign tint, and her hair was of the colour of gold, too deep a gold I thought for nature's own.

"Wasn't it awkward of you to rush up against me in that way?" she asked, looking as if she felt deeply injured, and pouting her lips in the prettiest manner in the world. "You might have knocked me down."

"But I assure you——"

"Well, I forgive you for this time; only don't do it again. I must be off now or I shall be late."

Oh, why don't you love me?
Tra-la-la. Tra-la-la.

And so singing she ran down stairs, and a second afterwards I could hear the street door shut behind her with a bang.

"A lively young creature that," I said to myself, as I mounted to my rooms by slow degrees. After dinner I strove to bring my mind back to the contemplation of my tragedy, but inspiration suddenly seemed to have deserted me. The brief encounter on the stairs had set all my ideas to

flight. Her face, her bright brown eyes and saucy lips, came before me when I looked at the ceiling, and between me and the paper when I strove to write. Then I found myself vaguely speculating as to whether we lived under the same roof; and if so whether I would have an opportunity of seeing her again. If I did, I should then, of course, behave very differently to what I had done, I would say something smart and polite to her, and perhaps discover who she was. But my chance had gone: fate might never bring us together again. Then it occurred to me that I felt somewhat dull and solitary, and pushing my manuscripts away I went out to the Green Room Club.

For days I saw no more of her, and by the end of a week I had almost forgotten my little encounter on the stairs in the grand progress of my tragedy. I was now making considerable way; blank verse of a very exalted style poured freely from my pen. I had come to the conclusion of the first act, which finished with a sensational climax, like the last paragraph in the weekly instalment of a penny journal. A fifth part of my work had been completed, and I felt tolerably happy, notwithstanding the trifling affair of a couple of murders which I had on my mind.

Indeed, on the evening when I had written the last line, I was in a state of intense excitement. I walked up and down the room exultingly, reciting some of my pet passages destined to bring down the galleries. Occasionally I paused before the looking-glass to adjust my smoking cap, and assume an expression suited to the tragic solemnity of my words. I remember distinctly I had got to the line,

Why this wild waste of soul-shed tears.

when I thought I heard that peculiar sound, which has been aptly described as a titter, outside my sitting-room door. I instantly paused, but all was silent, I had been mistaken. I then drew myself up to my full height, crossed my arms on my breast with a melodramatic gesture, and continued in a voice expressive of profoundest tragedy,

Why this wild waste of soul shed tears,
Sad wealth of dull despair's delight,
Begot of phantom-haunting fears.

These lines I repeated over and over again as a child turns a sweatmeat in its mouth, loath to lose its flavour. It was only when I had repeated it for the fifth time that I became conscious some one was rapping at the door.

"Who goes there—I mean come in," I cried out.

The door opened slowly and cautiously and a head was thrust in. I recognized the face at once, but the expression was quite different now; there were no smiles on the saucy lips, the eyes were grave almost to sadness. For a second or two they stared at me, and then a voice said:

"Are you ill?"

"Ill—no." I was startled by the question.

I believe a gleam of humour came into her face, but if so it was quickly repressed.

"I thought I had heard you groaning, and feared you were in pain," she said, with a tone of sympathy.

By this time she had opened the door fully and now stood on the threshold.

"I have been reading some selections from my works," I answered, with a brave assumption of dignity tempered with severity. Fearing I had been too austere, I added, "Pray come in and sit down." Here I waved my hand with a magnificent gesture and advanced to the door with long striding steps.

"Thank you," she replied, making me an elaborate curtsy, which if it had a suggestion of mock gravity, was not without grace.

"Extraordinary girl," I said to myself.

She posed herself in my best chair, and waited for me to begin the conversation.

"I have just been writing," I said, picking up a sheet of paper which had dropped to the floor from the table crowded with books, pamphlets, theatrical and comic journals.

"What?" she asked.

"A tragedy."

"A tragedy," she repeated under her breath, opening her eyes very wide, and glancing at me with an expression of awe. "Good gracious me."

"In six acts," I said quietly, as if the composition of tragedies in various numbers of acts was an every day occurrence to me.

"Doesn't it frighten you?" she asked.

"Doesn't what frighten me?"

"To write tragedies" (the last word pronounced very slowly).

I looked up quickly, but only caught an expression of the sweetest, most child-like innocence on her face. She had seen some tragedies played, I thought, and had been awed; she evidently possessed an impressionable nature.

"It does not frighten me," I made answer. "Occasionally I enter into the spirit of the characters I create, and then I feel for a time as if my personality was inseparably blended with theirs."

"How dreadful," she replied, and added quickly, "Then I suppose you walk up and down the room this way."

And, to my utter astonishment, she got up, folded her arms across her breast, and with long strides marched up and down the room, her brows knit, and a look in her eyes as if she beheld some deed of deadly horror; then she slowly repeated the lines:

Why this wild waste of soul shed tears,
Sad wealth of dull despairs delight,
Begot of phantom-haunting fears.

I must confess her gestures were decidedly good and her manner highly dramatic. I began to think I had mistaken my visitor.

"How do you know I walk up and down?" I asked, when I had recovered from my first surprise.

She threw herself into a chair and burst out laughing.

"Our sitting-room is on the next floor under this, and you know what lodging-house floors and ceilings are; we hear all."

I felt covered with confusion. They had of course overheard my soliloquies, and had listened to my measured tread when in moments of excitement I had walked up and down the length of my thirteen feet long apartment.

"I suppose you write a good deal," said my visitor, recalling me to the fact of her presence.

"Yes—that is no—I mean yes," I stammered. "I have written a couple of dramas and am now engaged in the composition of a tragedy."

"You are a real live genius," she said, assuming a tone of wonder.

Was this but satire, or was it the expression of her genuine and very natural surprise and admiration at being brought face to face, probably for the first time in her life, with a dramatic author.

"Have your dramas been accepted?"

"No," I answered, feeling sorry she had found it necessary to the satisfaction of her curiosity to ask me that question. "Owing to the prevailing custom of running pieces for such a considerable time, and the number of dramas offered to managers——"

"I know," she interrupted, "you have been left out in the cold!"

"In the cold?"

"Yes—you wouldn't pay."

This, I thought, was certainly cool—nay, impertinent; but I mentally confessed it savoured of knowledge of the world. I drew myself up and looked at her. She had certainly a pretty face, wayward, almost childlike in its expression, but saucy, decidedly saucy. I am, however, by nature a chivalrous man, and so can forgive a charming woman almost anything. I therefore by way of responding to her last sentence merely bowed, perhaps a little stiffly, and then stood facing her with one hand laid on a chair near me, and the other resting on my hip, as if I were posing for a sixpenny photograph on Wandsworth Common.

"What else do you write?" she asked, not in the least heeding my stiffness, as I intended she should have done. She looked at the table where the confusion of manuscripts and papers lay in what I was pleased to consider a professional-like litter.

"I write for the comic papers."

She burst out laughing at my answer.

"Ah, that pays better, I dare say," she replied, "a joke is better any day than a tragedy—there is some hope for you yet."

"Madam," I commenced, but was immediately silenced by a loud peal of laughter.

"Don't call me, Madam, you funny man, or I shall die from laughter," she said, when she could find voice to speak. Tears stood in her eyes, and made them look all the brighter and more saucy. "One would think to look at you that you could never make a joke; you are so stiff and solemn."

"I am sorry."

"Oh, don't apologize to me."

"I was about to say"——

"That people are often most grave when they make jokes, and laugh when their hearts are breaking. I know the story of Joey Grimaldi, and his wretched life, poor fellow; and I know from experience too," she added, her voice changing and softening as she spoke, "what it is to be almost heart-broken, whilst I have had to look my best and sing in my jolliest way."

"You?" I said, wondering who or what this strange girl could be. I did not doubt her words, there was a ring of truth in her voice.

"Yes; but that time is over now, and I don't mind speaking of it—to you," she added, after a pause that imparted a world of confidence to her words. "I was once terribly in love—only once: and with a

man who never suspected the fact, never knew it then, never shall know it now. Ah, how I suffered. The torture I endured from loving him and keeping my love concealed, nearly eat my heart out; and yet every night I went down to the Gaiety and sang my songs, and spoke my lines and laughed, whilst the theatre oftentimes span round me, and the music almost drove me mad, and the lights seemed to burn into my brain."

She gave a short hollow laugh that had no music in its sound. I did not speak, but I lifted my eyes to her's, and I think she understood all I would have said.

"But I had to do this," she continued, "because I earn my bread honestly, and another life was depending on me for support and comfort. I suppose it's a thing all women have to go through some time. I think I feel all the stronger, all the better for it now. It has helped me to understand many acts in women's lives, and made me feel more tolerant, more lenient to my sex."

"You are an actress?" I asked, after a short pause.

"Yes, I am a burlesque actress, and have been since I was fifteen years old. I can earn my bread as honest on the stage as I could in any other employment, though the world will not believe that," she said, as if she considered it necessary to defend her position.

"Never mind what the world says," I answered, and she repaid my words with a bright, grateful glance.

"You live in this house?" I ventured to ask.

"Yes, I support myself and my old grannie, and we live here. Did you wonder who and what I was?" she said, with that charming piquant look coming back into her face.

"I confess I was rather puzzled."

She seemed to enjoy my mystification.

"My father," she said, "was an English artist, and he married a Frenchwoman, my mother. It was what is called a love match, and I suppose they were both very very foolish. He died when I was nine years old, and my mother died soon after him: with his death all the light went out of this world for her. Then I was left alone with grannie—my mother's mother—the dearest old soul living. We were dreadfully poor and became poorer as we gradually spent what grannie had hoarded. I often look back and wonder how we lived. Sometimes when we were hungry and miserable, she sang to me and taught me to dance, she said it would keep us from thinking of food and prevent our hearts from sinking, and that it was better to sing than to cry. Ah! she was brave. One day, when I was about fifteen, and the wolf was not only at our door but had taken possession of our little room and lay down upon our black hearth, I went down to Mr. Hollingshead, and telling him that I could dance and sing, I begged of him to give me some employment. A scene-painter's wife, a charitable-hearted woman, who lived next door to us and was very good to us, told me to do this; she said I might get fifteen shillings a week. Mr. Hollingshead was very kind; he said he liked my face, and then he asked me to sing for him. I had eaten nothing all the morning, I was giddy from weakness, and I felt a great sinking at my heart; but I remembered poor old grannie, and how much depended on my success, and I summoned courage and sang

my best though I could scarcely keep from crying all the while. He was, however, satisfied, and told me that I was pretty and gave me a small part in a new burlesque just coming out. He offered me twenty shillings a week to commence with. I was almost mad with joy at the prospect, and from that day neither grannie nor I have known what hunger is."

Whilst she spoke her facile face changed expression, almost with every sentence, and there was by turns pathos and pity, pleasure and triumph reflected in her bright eyes. When she had finished, I held out my hand to her; she took it freely and I felt in a moment we were friends.

"Have you ever written a burlesque?" she asked me presently.

"A burlesque?—Never," I answered, horrified at the question. Burlesques I held to be the lowest form of dramatic composition: my genius soared to tragedies in six acts.

"You write for the comic papers, and yet you say you have never attempted a burlesque, for which there is a comparatively open field; but I suppose you are superior to burlesques?"

"I confess—" I began—

"Never confess nonsense," she interrupted, with an air of common sense that would have become an octagonarian, "nor never have an idea beyond what pays, if you want to succeed in this world."

"Your advice is very philosophical."

"Is it? I hardly know what philosophy is, but I have known what it is to be hungry," she replied with a smile, and I felt that her answer rebuked my intended sarcasm.

"Why don't you hang all your jokes together on some plot, no matter how ridiculous it may be, just as we string beads on a thread: we never stop to examine the thread you know, if the beads please us: then introduce a few comic songs and you have a burlesque ready made. The world wants to laugh, not to be frightened by your great tragedies, to be amused, not forced to think of your philosophies. We have no time now-a-days; but if you once please the world and win its favour, no matter how, it will pay you well, for it is always generous to its favourites. Now," added this charming little woman, "after swallowing so much wisdom you must be thirsty. Its just five o'clock, so come down and have tea with us; no one in the world makes tea like grannie, Madame Rose, and I know you will be charmed with her. When we have finished, if I have time, you can read me a page or two of your great tragedy—is it all in blank verse? well grannie is deaf and won't mind."

She gave a merry rippling little laugh, stood up, put her arms a kimbo, and made a burlesque exit from my room; waiting for me, however, when she got outside the door, with all the air of a woman whose wishes never meet with contradiction. I followed her down the narrow stairs, noting her little feet, watching her graceful figure, and listening to her musical voice with a new sense of pleasure stirring in my heart. In the sitting-room Madame Rose was asleep in a big arm-chair close by a ruddy fire: her handsome dark old face was brought into strong relief by her silvery hair, crowned by a spotless Normandy cap. Her granddaughter stepped across the room, softly knelt beside the old dame, put her arms round her lightly and woke her with a kiss.

"Ma Chère Marie," the old lady said, opening

her bright brown eyes; and placing her wrinkled hands on the young girl's head she touched her forehead with her lips.

That was one of the most delightful evenings of my life, notwithstanding that my new friend laughed heartily over the selected passages which at her request, I read aloud to her from the first act of my tragedy.

"It is droll," she said, wiping the tears, which her laughter had caused, from her eyes.

The old lady looked on calmly, nodding her head now and then, not hearing a word of what was going on. When I had concluded she smiled at me.

"Monsieur is a wit?" she said, seeing that her granddaughter laughed so heartily: then she let her eyes rest on the manuscript pages which I with some confusion stuffed into my pocket.

"You would no doubt succeed as a burlesque writer," the young girl said to me. "From what you have read I will guarantee that: for as there is but a short step between the sublime and the ridiculous, so there are but a few inches between tragedy and burlesque. Now it is half-past seven and I must be off—promise me you will try and write a burlesque."

By this time I was ready to promise her anything, ready to do anything which man might attempt for her sake. Moreover I kept the promise I gave her that evening, and during the progress of my new effort, which I called *Lorenzo the Loveable*, I frequently went down to drink tea with Madame Rose, and afterwards to read my pages to Marie, who made suggestions and gave hints which I invariably acted upon. It was a delightful time, this morning of our courtships, that gradually grew to the full unclouded noon of our happiness.

When *Lorenzo the Loveable* was finished, Marie introduced me to her manager, who, after long consideration and many doubts, was willing to give my burlesque a chance. It was, therefore, put on in the handsomest manner with scenery specially painted and costumes specially designed for it. Thank heaven it succeeded and had a long run. Since then I have devoted myself to burlesque with great success, and Marie has left the stage and become my wife.

SHAUN THE RUNNER.

By the Author of "The Romance of a Country House."

"**B**E on the little island at nine. Let every man bring a saw, or a chopper. None o' yez be late."

The speaker, a tall, sturdy fellow wearing a soft wide-awake hat and rough grey freize coat, was leaning against the door-post of a little *shebeen*, in the outskirts of a village on the south bank of the Shannon, not far from Limerick.

It was a late autumn evening. The sun had dipped behind the hills, and the grey shades of twilight were stealing over the landscape. Through the still air the lowing of the cattle and the cries of the herds fell pleasantly on the ear. In the background Keeper hill rose dark against the sky. The broad expanse of the mighty river was deserted save by a single *coracle*, whose tenant lay listlessly

in the stern, suffering himself to be drifted along by the current.

The blue smoke from the turf fires of the little hamlet, hung like a thin veil above the thatched roofs. Here and there in the straggling street, the peasants clustered in little groups; the women gossiping over their knitting; the children tumbling and rolling in the gutter, a playground which they shared with the pigs; the men listening eagerly to the village "scholar," who read aloud with many pauses, and much skipping of long words, an account of a "great robbery of arms from a ship at Limerick."

In the centre of the village stood the hotel, for so was designated a tumble down edifice, the only house in the village that could boast a second story and a slate roof.

In times of bygone prosperity it had been white-washed. Now, through long neglect, great patches had scaled off, and the walls presented a mottled, damp, and dirty appearance.

Most of the window-panes were either replaced by sheets of brown paper or rag, or showed a star pattern centring in a lump of putty. Over the door a battered sign-board bore the legend.

"MYLES RAFFERTY,"

Licensed in Whisky and Entertainments.

Wretched it looked, and very wretched indeed it seemed to Whitworth Gillespie, sub-inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary, who had been lately despatched to Rathoge on special duty concerning the arms robbery. Fresh from the depot in Dublin, and the luxuries and festivities of the capital, he found special duty in the west of Ireland very unpleasant, and was beginning to realize that a sub's quarters in the barracks in the Phoenix Park, was a palace when compared with Mr. Rafferty's best room. He had dined and, a cigar in his mouth, was now resting his elbows on the windowsill, looking out into the street. He was a fine smart young fellow, well set up and soldierlike. His sword and belt with revolver in case were upon a chair near him. On the mantelpiece lay several blue envelopes marked, O.H.M.S., and one which had just been delivered to him had fallen to the floor. He held its contents crumpled in his hand. "Information received. Arms concealed near Rathoge. Likely to be brought down the river by boat. Keep a careful watch." He muttered. "If I could only light on their whereabouts, get hold of the gang and get out of this cursed hole."

He walked up and down the room, then calling out "Rafferty," was assured by a voice from the lower regions, and the host came into the room, a jolly, good-humoured looking man of fifty or thereabout.

"Any one asking for me?"

"Sorra one, yer honner, at all, on'y Shaun the Runner."

"Who's he?"

"Shure he's the nath'ral. The fool."

"What does he want?"

"The poor daft crater says he has a message or a letter for yer honner, but no one minds poor Shaun."

"Send him here at once."

Most villages in Ireland can show an idiot—poor, harmless creatures, yet often strong and

well-grown, and not unfrequently great athletes and clever poachers. They loaf about doing small jobs, or carrying messages. Shaun the Runner was so called, because, on one occasion, when a luckless process-server had been waylaid, Shaun, who was standing by, had picked up the documents which had fallen to the ground, and running away at such a rate that no one could overtake him, had delivered them safely at the nearest Post-office, thereby saving the unfortunate limb-of-the-law an unpleasant meal, as he would have been compelled to eat all his writs. He was a curious mixture of imbecility and cunning. Though he would play with the schoolboys, and beg for sweets and candy, still there was not one in the whole county who could show you where the biggest salmon was to be caught, or lead you to a good spot for grouse, more surely than Shaun the Runner.

"Please, Sir, tis me—Shaun," and a figure attired in rags and tatters, that had once been an old shooting suit, stood in the doorway.

"Come in my man. What do you want with me?"

"Shaun has a letter for the Polis Officer."

"Give it here at once."

"Shaun's to get a shillin."

"There! Confound you! The letter!"

"Shaun's not to be took up."

"No, you won't be meddled with."

The idiot stood with his eyes fixed on the smoke blackened rafters, shuffling his feet and turning over and over in his hands his old carbine, but made no sign of delivering the missive. The officer was rapidly losing his temper.

"None of your infernal foolery. Give me the letter, or it will be the worse for you."

"Shaun's afeared o' the polis. Shaun doesn't know it's about the arms."

"What! about the arms?" Mr. Gillespie strode excitedly across the room and laid hold of the idiot's arm. "Give it up this instant!"

Shaun turned his old hat inside out. Stuck in the lining was a greasy crumpled envelope. The officer snatched it out, and quickly tearing it open read the contents.

"There'll be more nor fishin on the river this night. Barkers to be landed at Furny Glen. Burn this. A Friend."

Opening his pocket book he took from it a piece of paper covered with writing, and carefully compared the two.

"The same hand that warned Blake. I must see to this at once," he muttered.

"Who told you what the letter was about? Who sent you here?" he said, turning to Shaun who still stood at the door.

"Shaun don't know who giv it him. T'was in the dark. All the people talks about the arms."

The sub-inspector eyed Shaun suspiciously for a moment: seemingly reassured by the blank expression of his face he dismissed him, and turning to the window blew a whistle. A sergeant of police came round from the back of the house, and entering, was soon in eager conversation with his superior.

"Now, Mullin, I believe I've got a clue to the stolen arms. Read that."

The sergeant, a bronzed gray-haired veteran, took the letter and read it over slowly.

"Yes, likely enough, sir; but——"

"You don't think it is a hoax?"

"Well," I don't know, sir! You see if the men all go to the Furny Glen, the rest of the places along the river will be unguarded, and we're so short-handed—only six of us."

"That's all very true, Mullin, but I'm sick and tired of watching in this place. Here's a chance of catching them, and I won't let it slip. Let the men be in ambush in the Glen by eleven to-night. Have two cars with good horses. I'll meet you all there. Let them go separately, and by different routes, so as not to attract attention."

"All right, sir," and the sergeant withdrew.

Shaun, when he left the hotel, turned down the street towards the river side. He stopped near one of the groups of peasantry, uttering the customary salutation, "God save all here," was greeted with the reply, "God curse all spies! Pass on. We want none o' ye," and the group broke up and dispersed into their houses. Even the little children, who delighted to play with the idiot, clung to their mother's skirts and cried "Informer."

Shaun stood a moment disconcerted, then flung his hat in the air, caught it as it came down, gave a loud whoop, and started off at a rapid pace. When he reached the little shebeen, situated at the outskirts of the town, a tall man in a rough grey coat was still leaning against the door post. He raised his hand as Shaun approached. Shaun made a gesture in reply, turned abruptly to the left, and disappeared down a lane. The man took a handkerchief from his pocket, and waved it over his head. The signal was answered from the coracle. Putting his head in the doorway he said a few words in a low voice, then walked down to the river side, presently got into the little boat, and taking an oar, pulled round the bend of the river. Some few minutes afterwards four or five rough-looking, sturdy peasants came out singly from the shebeen and turned into the fields.

Darkness had now set in. The little village street was deserted. Here and there, through an open door, a rushlight faintly twinkled, showing the family within, sitting at their evening meal of potatoes, the pig noisily pleading his right to a share. Three or four old men sat round the doorway of the hotel smoking their pipes.

"There'll be bad work to-night I'm afeard," said one, "The bhoys is out, an I'm tould the Polis has heard something."

"Tis that Shaun the Runner. He wor in wid the Inspecthur. Rafferty says he brought a letter."

"If the bhoys gets caught 'twill be a bad job for Shaun."

"Sarve him right. 'Tis informers that kapes the counthry down."

"Here's the Inspecthur. Begorra! there's something up."

The group ceased the conversation as the police officer passed them. He was fully equipped with sword and revolver at his side. He walked smartly down the street and was soon out of sight.

About three miles from Rathoge, a spur from the hills runs down through the plain, and, splitting as it approaches the river, forms a ravine, whose sides are densely wooded. After wet weather a fierce torrent rushes down, now a little streamlet murmurs among the masses of granite, stealing timorously round huge blocks which, when swollen by the rains, it will dash

impetuously from its path. A narrow footway with rustic bridge crosses the valley, a pleasant shady walk in summer time, formerly the favourite trysting place of the swains and lasses of the neighbouring villages, now, alas! deserted.

Bold indeed would she be who dared to enter the Furny Glen after nightfall. Does not the ghost of Murtough, the bailiff, walk there? Does he not kneel beneath that pine tree with the cross cut upon its bark, holding his hands above his head? Can you not hear him cry aloud, "Mercy! Mercy!" Aye, can you not, when the wind blows fiercely through the trees, hear, in the lull of the storm, the sound of the cruel blows that beat his life out, that black day of his murder? The peasants, old and young, say yes. Lonely and deserted is the Furny Glen. The main road runs close by, and drawn up under the trees stand two jaunting cars, the horses yoked, and the drivers lying at their ease on the grass. Hidden in the rushes by the riverside, six armed men, dressed in the constabulary uniform, are lying, watching the river. All is very still; no sound but the lapping of the water amongst the stones, as it flows smoothly on to the sea, or the cry of some water fowl as it rises from the reeds. A light breath of air rustling through the trees makes one or two superstitious young constables glance back hurriedly and nervously into the Furny Glen.

"'Tis past eleven," said one to his comrade. "Mr. Gillespie is late."

"Hist! Here he comes!" and the young officer joined the party.

"Well Mullin! all here?"

"Yissir, nothing has passed or been seen since we came."

"Good. Now my men I expect an attempt will be made to land the arms here to-night. If a boat comes, you three cover her with your revolvers. Fire if they attempt to escape. The others keep a sharp look out on the land side. The moon will be up at twelve, and they'll be sure to make use of the darkness, so keep a sharp look out and be ready for them."

Half an hour passed. Nothing was seen or heard. Could the letter have been a hoax? Was Mullin's suspicion right? Perhaps at this moment the arms were being carried through the village, he had left unguarded. If so, how was he to stand the ridicule of his fellows? Such were the unpleasant thoughts passing through Whitworth Gillespie's mind, as he paced up and down under the trees trying to see the hands of his watch by the light of the stars.

"A nice mess I'll get into with the Castle," he said half aloud.

Suddenly the sergeant cried in a low tone of suppressed excitement, "There's something moving under the bank of that island—the one next us."

All eyes were eagerly turned in the direction indicated, towards one of a group of densely wooded islands, the favourite hiding place of the river poachers.

"Yes! Yes! I see it. By Jove it's a boat. Now it's out of the shadow! Coming this way! Now! my lads, be ready."

Some eighty yards away all could now plainly see a dark spot on the water moving noiselessly along. Dark lines diverging behind marked the water, and an occasional gleam of light as the

stars were reflected from the dripping oar blades showed that there was someone on board.

Slowly and steadily on came the boat, the occupant evidently unconscious of the reception awaiting him. Forty, thirty, twenty yards off! Mr. Gillespie could contain himself no longer. Springing to his feet he cried in a voice trembling with excitement.

"Come here with that boat, or I'll fire," presenting his revolver.

The rower apparently surprised, pulled a back stroke and checked the boat.

"Pull ashore this moment."

"Oh! Mr. Inspector is it you? Shure of course I'll come. 'Tis me, Shaun the Runner. I've only got a bit of fish that I was tould to bring ashore at the Furny Glen." As he spoke the boat reached land.

Two policeman caught Shaun by the collar and dragged him ashore, while the inspector sprang into the boat and turned his dark lantern on the contents. Three fine salmon lay on a heap of nets and fishing tackle, seemingly there was nothing else. Turning these out, the flooring came into view. Quickly raising one of the planks, a cry of triumph broke from Mr. Gillespie as two long bags, occupying the place of the ballast, met his eyes.

"Hurrah! We've got them," he cried. "Bear a hand here my lads. Let's get them ashore."

They were heavy, but were soon lifted out on to the bank.

"Away with them to the cars. They're the guns sure enough," cried the sub-inspector, after feeling the contents through the sacking.

Two constables shouldered each sack, and the whole party made haste towards the cars, bringing Shaun with them. Sergeant Mullin with true military instinct hooked the gaff in the largest of the fish, and followed.

"I'll have something in hand" he muttered.

The party soon reached the cars. The drivers were on the alert, and having heard them coming, the sacks were soon placed on the well. Some of the constables had mounted to their seats when Mullin said: "What shall we do with the fool sir? There's no use in bringin' him along."

"Oh no. Mr. Inspector. Let poor Shaun go. Shaun doesn't know anythin'. Shure 't was me brought the letther."

"Very well! let him go. You'd better not keep such company, my poor fellow, as you've been in to-night, or you'll be getting into trouble. Away with you."

Shaun touched his hat, the drivers lashed the horses, and the cars started off at a gallop towards Rathoge.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" A scream of laughter burst from Shaun as the party started, and, darting into the bushes, the idiot disappeared.

"Eh, Mullin. What the deuce does he mean?" said Mr. Gillespie.

"Sorra a know I know Sir. I hope the guns are alright."

"Oh yes. You can feel the barrels through the sacks."

Half an hour's rapid driving brought them safely to the Police Barracks. The sacks were carried in and laid on the table. Opening his pocket knife Mr. Gillespie nervously ripped up one. Imagine his feelings on finding it filled with neatly trimmed branches cut in the shape of guns.

SOME POETS' CATS.

BY PHIL ROBINSON.

A familiar beast to man and signifies love.

—M.W. of W.

"Sold! By Jove!" he groaned.

A scrap of paper lay on the top. He picked it up, and staggering to the light, read:

"The Bhoys axes pardon for troublin yer honner. Will yer honner kape the fishes? We send some wood for cookin'. The guns is all safe thank ye kindly."

P. S. The messenger is pade."

"Oh! This is too much: and I wrote to headquarters before I went out."

Mr. Gillespie sank into a chair.

"To think of that Shaun bein' so cute!" exclaimed Mullins. "Anyways sir it can't be helped, an' here's the best of the fish," and he produced the salmon.

The sub-inspector rose to his feet, shook his head mournfully, and walked off quite crestfallen to his quarters at the hotel.

Rafferty opened the door.

"Is there anythin' you'd like for supper sir? No? Very well sir. The paper, sir. I s'pose the first thing in the morning," this last with a grin.

Mr. Gillespie strode into his room and slammed the door.

"Confound it all! That fellow has heard it already. I'll resign."

The local morning paper had indeed a long paragraph detailing the aggressive conduct of the police, in seizing a fishing-boat and carrying off the contents, and deprecating the increase of rates entailed by the drafting of extra police into a peaceable district for such purposes.

Worse than all, the Irish Secretary was badgered in the House by a patriot, being asked if such proceedings had the sanction of Government, and if not, would the Lord Lieutenant take steps to withdraw such an inefficient person from the control of the police &c. &c.

Poor Gillespie told it to us very dismally in the smoking room of the—Royal Mail Steamer, as she dashed through the north Atlantic rollers, taking him with others to seek better luck in the far west.

"And hang it all! They've never found those guns since, you know!"

EVENING DEWS.

CLEAR is the night, and still.

The pores of earth are open anew.

The brimming heavens distil

In faint deliciousness of dew.

Unbend, my soul, unbend;

The ancient bitterness resolve.

The blood is dry i' the wound,

And famished love must have an end.

Oh let the stain these dewes dissolve!

Come, fragrance of the night,

And spread thyself within, around,

And though the soul's sick pulses move,

And make it ready, warm and white,

A habitation to surround

The new and perfect love.

AMBROSE BENNETT.

JUST as the dog is the poetical register of the out-of-door life of man, the index of the pleasures and occupations of the open air, the "power" (so to speak) of the human quantity, so the cat, in its differing moods and aspects, expresses the various phases of domestic life, and stands for the symbol of the alternations of existence within doors. The history of the family inside the house might be hieroglyphically written in a series of cats.

On the garden-wall, soliloquising at the top of its voice, it means the household a-bed; on the doorstep, with a too-much-whisky-overnight expression of face, it denotes the hour when the milkman and the sweep, like larks, "lead on the merry hours" and rouse the day; before the kitchen fire, blinking at the kettle, it signifies breakfast; rubbing itself, all on the slant, against the cook's petticoats, we know that it is the hour of noon—of scraps from the early dinner; asleep on the hearth all the afternoon, it wakes up with a start when the jack cracks under the twirling joint for the later meal; the children's tea-hour finds it in the nursery; as evening closes in it sits before the fire musing—Shall I go to the club? or what shall I do with myself to-night?—and then comes darkness, and the cat is in the garden or on the pantiles, sitting in moonstruck reverie or sharing a most melancholy dialogue. The cat dejected or elated, morose or amiable, distant or familiar, acrimonious or conciliatory, alarmed or tranquil, dreadfully awake or fast asleep—in a score of other tempers and states of mind—reflects a corresponding variation in the domestic barometer. It is the indicator of the fluctuations of family emotions, and apparently without spontaneity in its moods, without independence in its actions. Its existence would seem to be wholly relative. It lives within the influence of perpetual attractions. It goes to the fire because the meat is roasting with just the same mechanical regularity as it mews when it hears the milkman. These are natural forces which it seems powerless to resist.

Now how is it that this little creature—the incarnation of evasive vagrancy, one of the most hopeless of Bohemians, as restless as the tides, and as fickle as the breeze, whose amiabilities are nearly all self-indulgence, and gratuities self-interest—has come to be regarded as the type of domesticity and symbol of the hearth, where "the little Lares keep their vigils round"?

Thou sayst also, I walke out like a cat;
For who so wolde senge the cattles skin,
Than wol the cat wel dwellen in hire inn:
And if the cattles skin be sleke and gay,
She wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,
But forth she wol,

to "shew her fur and be caterwauled," as Pope has it in his translation of the "Wif of Bath's Prologue."

The kitten's position in the household is easier to understand. It is one of the most beautiful and amusing of pets. The man who could watch a kitten and not laugh must have had a death-

rattle as his plaything when a baby. Not only is their unconscious absurdity immense, but they have a deliberate appreciation of humour. They know exactly when they are being played with and when teased. Montaigne "playing with his cat complains she thought him but an ass."

Ye who can smile—to wisdom no disgrace
At the arch meaning of a kitten's face,

must remember many a time and oft when the small thing, with its elegant overtures to a frolic, has tempted you into joining it in a fit of nonsense. And how it acted all the time, the fluffy little impostor! What an enthusiasm it obviously feigned for the trailing worsted, what desperate struggles it made believe to have with a tassel, how it pranced and cavorted, standing ridiculously on two legs and skipping sideways! With what matchless art did it not pretend to get itself into inextricable difficulties with a chair leg, in order to show off a hundred pretty devices of paddling with its paws, and then in an instant how it was up and off with its tail all crooked, its ears anyhow, and an absurd affectation of being scared! Or, when two are together and one is lazy, with what adroitness will the other beguile its companion into a romp, gradually coaxing it on till it is in an equal frenzy of light-heartedness with itself. No wonder children love them so. Their faces areas sweetly innocent as their own, and their delightful little cosy bodies made for a baby's cuddling. Their natures are curiously alike. A kitten will seldom take offence at what a little child does to it—and the outrageous liberties taken with pussy are sometimes dreadful to contemplate. I have seen my little boy go through a meal with a kitten held in bag-pipe fashion under his arm; and the poor animal stayed there with a half-squeezed look on its face that was infinitely pathetic, but made no complaint. Its confidence in the child carried it through the ordeal. It knew he would not do it if it was not all right. And so it was; for by-and-by the boy got the kitten and a saucer of milk together, and, though there was a good deal of unnecessary bobbing of its nose into the milk, the kitten took it all as meant in kindness, and, when it had had its face dried on a pinafore, was ready for another romp. But they can scratch when they are put out, as Joanna Baillie's fat Tommy found—

He did her hinder parts assail
And pinched and pulled the kitten's tail.
On this her sudden anger rose,
She turned and straightway scratched his nose.

But it is of course the good-humoured and playful kitten that chiefly attracts the poets. Many such are to be found gambolling in verse: Wordsworth's yellow one, playing with the falling leaves—

Over-wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure;

Gray's tortoiseshell, that got drowned trying to catch gold-fish—

Malignant Fate sate by and smiled,
The slippery verge her feet beguiled—
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood,
She mowed to every wat'ry god

Some speedy aid to send,
No dolphin came, no Nereid stirred,
Nor cruel Tom nor Susan heard—
A favourite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties undeceived,
Know one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize—
Nor all that glitters gold;

the kittens of Cowper and Hurdia, Blomfield and Gay, and a score of others who delight in "the instinct joy of kitten," "the kitling ever happy." By-and-by, and all too soon, they grow into cats.

And so, poor kit! must thou endure,
When thou becomest a cat demure,
Full many a cuff and angry word,
Chased roughly from the tempting board.
But yet, for that thou hast, I ween,
So oft our favoured play-mate been,
Soft be the change which thou shalt prove!
When time hath spoiled thee of our love,
Still be thou deemed by housewife fat,
A comely, careful, mousing cat;
Whose dish is, for the public good,
Replenished oft with savoury food.
Nor, when thy span of life is past,
Be thou to pond or dung-hill cast;
But gently borne on gardener's spade,
Beneath the decent sod be laid;
And children show, with glistening eyes,
The place where poor old pussy lies.

In connection with the adage that the cat has nine lives—found very useful, by-the-way, in verse—a very delightful instance of what Bain would call eccentric ratiocination occurs in Barry Cornwall. The line is this:—

One bite of a mad cat—no more than would kill a
Tailor.

The relation here of a nine-lived cat (each cat being really, therefore, only a ninth of one) to a tailor who, they say, is only the ninth of a man is, it seems to me, most humorously involved. For myself, I discredit the theory of sartorial fractions, and hold with the poet (Taylor) who says—

Some foolish knave, I think, it first began
The slander that three tailors make one man.

I always feel inclined to retort upon it with the other adage that "Tis the tailor makes the man" so in "King Lear,"

A tailor makes a man? Aye, a tailor, sir;

and hesitate to contribute my acquiescence in the circuitous arithmetic of the playwright who makes a character, on meeting eighteen tailors, cry out to them all, "Come on; I'll fight you both."

I remember well enough what Petruchio says to his tailor—

O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest,
Thou thread, thou thimble,
Thou yard, three-quarters, half
Yard, quarter, nail,
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket, thou,
Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant!

and do not forget Montaigne's evidence. "I have," he says, "an honest lad to my taylor, who I never knew guilty of one truth—no not when it had been to his advantage not to lye."

But I remember also how master Feeble, "the

forcible Feeble," proved himself the best man of all Falstaff's recruits; with what discretion Robin Starveling played the part of Thibsy's mother before the Duke; and carry it to their credit the public spirit of those stitchers of Tooley Street.

"Give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to man the tailors of the earth."

I have no wish to rehabilitate Urquiza of Paita, nor apologize for the tailor who pricked the elephant's trunk with his needle and got squirted with a puddle by Behemoth for doing so—except to say that I think the elephant was an ill-mannered beast to go thrusting several feet of trunk into a tailor's shop. Nor do I ask to have that nursery rhyme abolished which makes the tailors go forth to attack a snail, but retire defeated on seeing her horns.

Yet, when I think of all the valiant tailors of story, I hesitate to believe that four-and-twenty of the trade should have been panic-stricken at the spectacle of an enraged snail. What shall we say of that Snip of Basle who kissed the dragon-princess? It is true that, the worst accomplished, he turned and fled, leaving his victory incomplete. Not so much, perhaps, as a Hercules or a Sir Gawain would have done; yet how many heroes had failed before the tailor succeeded! Then, again, there was that other who passed the night with a bear, and won the princess; that other who slew seven at a blow, and lived himself to be a king; that brave journeyman whom De Quincey has made immortal for his courage. In many other ways they have been distinguished these knights of the needle, from the father of Thumbling to the tailor of Yarrow who beat Mr. Tickler hollow at backgammon. Who was it charitably mended the bean, and who that sewed up the ship that was smashed on the rocks? Oriental story is full of tailors of consequence. Remember that one who befriended Prince Amgiad when he fell among the Fire-worshippers, and him who took in the poor hunchback who choked with a fish-bone. Was not Aladdin himself the son of Mustapha the tailor?—and a right good father he was, dying at last out of sheer grief at Aladdin's scapegrace ways. In the great Mosque at Mecca there is a Tailor's Gate.

But there is no need to accumulate such testimonies to the worth of the cross-legged craft—and not more use. For it has got into our system—into the British Constitution, in fact—that it takes nine tailors to make one man, and the equation will never probably be abandoned. So after this digression let me return to Barry Cornwall and his mad cat and its nine lives.

In every town there is a constant proportion of vagabond cats that have no homes; and what house is there that has not at one time or another mysteriously lost its cat? Now, is there no connection between these two phenomena? For myself, I cannot help thinking that the "lost" cats are merely animals that, "to serve some private ends," have deliberately gone elsewhere. The gipsy instinct has overtaken them, and they have decamped in quest of adventure, and on the chance of "bettering" themselves. Some of them, perhaps, go away to die—for is it not a curious fact that so few of these pets ever die at home? But the majority simply disappear. The children are told pussy has "run away." By-and-by

another cat comes. That is to say, it installs itself. No one probably invited it, but, as it was mewing very much, the hall-door or the kitchen-door was opened, and it was allowed to come in, on approbation. But the small stranger made herself at home at once, rubbed against the cook's petticoats—cats have an extraordinary instinct for cooks—and sat down in the very middle of the hearth opposite the fire, and there it remained.

As there was no other cat in the house, it was taken on. Now, it must have come from somewhere, as certainly as its predecessor went somewhere; so that, as a matter of fact, there is a perpetual exchanging of cats going on. Everybody gets everybody else's in turn.

This mysterious but periodical disappearance of the household pets finds, however, an explanation in the popular tradition that every cat has to spend one life out of its nine as a witch. The time comes when Death beckons to Grimalkin, and, whatever she is doing, she has to obey. But unless it be for the ninth and fatal time, there are no corporeal remains to show for the decease, no dead cat lying in the garden, or on the out-house roof, or wherever it may have been that the dread summons reached her. On each of the other eight occasions she simply vanished from the earth as the cat she was, and in the same instant reappeared in a new avatar. Tabby yesterday, she is black to-day. But the supreme occasion arrives when the cat, conscious of coming change, sits before the fire, looking into the heart of the blaze, and lost in thought. A voice she dare not refuse to hear calls her away from the comfortable hearth, and she goes, pensively, out into the dark night. The wind blows shrill, the clouds are driving fast. She would like to go back to the fire and the cook. But something she may not resist draws her onward deeper into the gloom. The bushes round her hide the lights of the house. In the distance she hears the caterwauling of familiar voices. And while she sits, shivering, wondering, waiting, it all happens, and Grimalkin suddenly finds herself whisked off up into the sky. A long cloak streams backwards from her shoulders, a broomstick is between her legs—she is a witch.

Several refer to her as a thing of "venom'd spite and cruel scratch" "from a witch transformed." So in Southey's "Witch"—

What makes her sit there moping by herself,
With no soul near her but that great black cat,
And do but look at her!

and in Herrick's "Hag"—

In a dirty hair-trace
She leads on a brace
Of black boar-cats to attend her,
Who scratch at the moon
And threaten at noon
Of night from Heaven to rend her.

"Old Grimalkin's glaring eyes," so often a terror to "wee sleekit cowerin'" mice, is thus at times uncanny for human beings. Envy, "spitting spite," is symbolized as a cat.

Not that the familiar of the "wise woman" seems to take any very active part in her unkind performances. Her function appears to be that of a tacit accomplice—one who looks on at the wickednesses of the Black Art without actually put-

ting her hand to any particular villany, the sleeping partner of the confederacy. In Italy the cats that walk on the pantiles in the month of February only are supposed to be witches, and as such considered worthy of death. Somewhat analogous is our own "March cat," which combines with the eccentricity of the "March hare" a suspicion of necromantic leanings.

Relativity, thy name is Cat. It is not easy to imagine Grimalkin in a vacuum, isolated, alone in space. As easy to think of matter without giving it form as to conceive Puss without either a hearth, a dog, or a mouse.

"Dire foe of mouse"—"Grimalkin to domestic vermin sworn an everlasting foe."

Such are the usual "connotations," if I may use the word, of the cat in verse. She is the "mouse-eater," and, because the poets applaud her taste, becomes the "harmless necessary cat." It is a curious fact, however, that classic legend makes this animal the protector of the innocent; that in Hindoo mythology she is sometimes the ally of little birds, and that in monkish tradition St. Gertrude, who is the patroness of mice, is also the protector of cats. On the other hand, "the vermin-hunter" is a much more frequent character, and the oldest of all myths shows us the cat-moon eating up the gray mice of twilight. That Diana, a lunar divinity, should have taken the feline form is therefore strictly in accordance with the original Aryan fancy; and so, too, we find Freyja, the Scandinavian Selene, drawn sometimes by a team of cats.

Our mousers, however, seem to have declined deplorably from their old standards of diligence and dexterity. In other respects the type has been immeasurably improved. The size of some of these animals gives promise that before long we shall have cats to rival that Brobdingnagian creature that purred like a dozen stocking-weavers at work and thought Gulliver too small an insect to run after, and carrying such a fleece as shall make the shearing of cats an operation of commercial value. In beauty we have Grimalkins that would have driven Bubastis mad with envy; while for downright wild-beastishness what can we have fiercer-looking than the Russian lynx-like breed?

Yet, all the same, in spite of their Merovingian length of disorderly fur, or their furious aspect, in spite too of their surpassing elegance of colour and form, a suspicion widely prevails that the town-cat is abandoning its taste for mice. Daily familiarities with milkmen, the certainty of regular and ample meals, have dulled its appetite for the chase. Though it may not have forgotten that the mouse is toothsome, it remembers more than it used to do that the mouse is nimble, and very troublesome to catch. An ordinary cat will studiously devote its day to the circumvention of the lodger's canary rather than spend an hour upon the landlady's rats. A single bullfinch in the drawing-room is worth a wilderness of mice in the pantry.

Let take a cat, foster her with milk,
And tender flesh, and make her couch of silk,
And let her see a mouse go by the wall,
Anon she scorneth milk and flesh and all,
And every dainty that is in that house,
Such appetite hath she to eat the mouse.
Lo here hath kind her domination,
And appetite o'ercomes discretion,

This may have been true in Chaucer's time—it may even be true still. But yet there is abundant proof for the accusation that mouse-catching has become for the town-cat a mere pastime, or at best an avocation, a parergon. Just as the town-sparrow now only eats insects by way of dessert as it were, and never goes among trees except for an occasional picnic, so the cat amuses itself over the mouse-hole in the cupboard on a wet afternoon—and as often as not goes to sleep at her post.

If there be any other just cause of complaint against this pretty little favourite, it is surely its habit of vociferous dialogue during our hours of sleep. "Foul night-waking cat"—"clamorous o'er its joys"—"who amant misere."—(Shelley). How heartily the poets hated it.

I would rather hear cat-courtship
Under my bed-room window

is the worst that Sonthey can say of odious sounds. Nor is it easy to imagine any disturbance of slumber more exasperating than the melancholy love-makings of cats when they foregather immoderately on the garden wall and prolong their woful canticles into the hours of dawn—the dismal soliloquy muttered

From the depths of a divine despair

that by-and-by becomes a gruesome dialogue, in which the two voices rise in unison, from the expression of a profound longing, cavernous and sepulchral, up and up and up through the scale of sharpening grief to the utmost peaks of anguish, and then in a frenzied climax the two hearts break as one in a piercing discord of mutual appeal. Is all over? Are the two cats lying dead? Did their great hearts rend their little bodies in that last unspeakable moment of tender despair? Not a bit of it. Listen. They are beginning again, exactly where they began before, at the "De profundis," and they will climb up the keys in precisely the same abominable *crescendo* of misery, and when they can no longer restrain the pent-up torrent of their tortured affections they will mingle their voices in one wild shattering yell of pity for themselves.

Yet though the householder empties the phials of his wrath—and, if of a choleric soul, also all the movable trifles about the bedroom that may seem to an exasperated imagination suitable for throwing—upon the wretches for their nocturnal sibilations and those turbulent scimmages which invariably seem to result when cat meets cat in the witching hours of night, there comes with daylight a milder frame of mind. The tranquil spectacle of pussy snugly curled up in front of the fire routs all suspicions as to its having had any share in the outrageous frolics that broke the slumbers of the household, and causes the disturbances of over-night to be placed to the discredit of the cat "next door." The truth is, we are all too fond of our cats to continue long in wrath with them.

Yet in fable and fairy tale they are not treated with the tenderness and consideration one would expect for such a universal favourite, and the poets accept this tendency of folk-lore to laugh at and depreciate Grimalkin. All the cat-poems banter the animal, or place it in a ridiculous light. Besides those already noted,

there is Allan Ramsey's fable of the cats and the cheese, of which the monkey ate two-thirds in trying to make an exactly equal division, and kept the other third for his trouble. In the fable of the cat and the fox that reproach the wolf for killing a lamb, and immediately go off and kill a chicken themselves, as also in the stories where the cat is fooled by the mice, made to take the hot nuts off the bars by the ape, and beguiled into the oven by the sparrows, the motive is always to turn the laugh against Puss.

In Cowper's poem of the "Retired Cat," an excellent illustration is given of the creature's complacent self-assurance that everything in a household is specially arranged with relation to its own comforts. It finds the garden draughty, and, searching the house for a convenient couch, "some place of more serene repose," discovers an open drawer half-filled with soft linen, and curls itself up for sleep. By-and-by Susan comes in and shuts the drawer, pussy taking it all for granted that this is done for her greater tranquillity.

Was ever cat attended thus?
The open drawer was left, I see,
Merely to prove a nest for me;
For soon as I was well composed,
Then came the maid, and it was closed.
How smooth these kerchiefs, and how sweet!
Oh what a delicate retreat!
I will resign myself to rest
Till Sol, declining in the west,
Shall call to supper, when, no doubt,
Susan will come and let me out.

But she does not, and the cat nearly starves to death.

Even the notorious fact of their having been worshipped in Egypt brings them little credit; it only makes Egyptian worship discreditable—

Cats and dogs, and each obscener beast,
To which Egyptian dotards once did bow.

Or again—

Lang syne in Egypt beasts were gods,
See many that the men turn'd beasts,
Vermin and brutes, boot house or hold,
Had offerings, temples, and their priests.

And then the poet goes on to say how one day the people of the Nile sacrificed a rat to the great glory of the cat, and next day a cat to the great glory of a rat.

Not that their worship is by any means extinct. You have only to go to a cat-show to be assured of this. The old-world dignities of priestly service, temple-ceremonial and posthumous embalming have no doubt been lost in the lapse of time, but their place has been filled by a homage which is certainly more intelligent and scarcely less sincere. The days are long gone by when, to bury a cat, processions of white-robed Egyptians, crowned with convolvulus, acacia, and chrysanthemum, trailed their effigies of water-beast and reptile, and images of dog-headed or hawk-headed gods, with the clashing of cymbals and the singing of the choirs of Isis, down through long aisles of reverent folk, from the Memphian temple-gates to the catacombs under the rocks. But the modern taxidermist, as well as he can, has taken up the duties of the priests, and where the creatures of the Pharaoh's adoration used to be spiced, they are now stuffed. Instead of lying

swathed in cloths and steeped in aromatic gums within a syenite sarcophagus, Puss stands in the back parlour, and fixes with her glassy eye the new tenant of the hearthrug, and, from the cold neutrality of wires and wadding, gazes upon the domestic circle of which once *pars magna fuit*.

LOVE IS MORE THAN LIFE.

BY MABEL COLLINS.

Author of "In the Flower of Her Youth," "Viola Fanshawe," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE NEWS.

AGATHA sat alone in her room at the hotel that evening, waiting for Mr. Whitehead. Mrs. Birchmore found so much to delight her in the kitchens, and the lighted street, that she did not come near Agatha unless she was sent for.

It was useless for Agatha to try to read. Now that she had entered upon the struggle, it filled all her thoughts. Her future was so uncertain, her fate so doubtful, that her mind wandered among different visions, any one of which might be possible. The one she most dreaded to see realized was that of herself and her father standing as open enemies in a court of justice. She was determined, now, that she would not hesitate even at this ordeal. But she hoped and hoped, and almost prayed, that he might escape, and spare her this final shame and disgrace.

Thinking of this distressed and harrassed her; she rose and walked up and down the room, trying to banish the horrid picture from her mind. While she was thus restlessly moving about, some one came into the room very quietly. It was Mr. Whitehead. Agatha looked at his withered face, and read the expression on it immediately.

"You have some news!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, my dear young lady, I have," said Mr. Whitehead.

"Is it bad news?—what can it be?—surely there is no new misfortune can happen to me!"

Her thoughts flew instantly to Leonard, and his name was on her lips; but she did not utter it. She waited, afraid to anticipate a fresh blow.

"Lord Vanecourt has escaped," said Mr. Whitehead; "but not in the way you thought of. He has escaped the law here; but doubtless he has gone to be judged."

"He is dead!"

"Yes, he is dead," answered Mr. Whitehead.

Agatha stood quite still a moment, trying to realize that what she had so dreaded could never come to pass; trying to realize that she had no longer a father; that her enemy was gone! Then, with a heavy sigh, she went to a chair and sat down, leaning her head back wearily.

"Tell me how it happened," she asked.

"That is just the difficulty," said Mr. Whitehead. Then he described to her how he had found the house shut up, and entered with the police; and he told her of the state in which he had found her father's room.

"The body lies untouched until the inquest," said Mr. Whitehead. "Then it must be decided whether he committed suicide, or whether he was murdered."

"He did not commit suicide," said Agatha. "No one who knows him would think that, whatever the appearances might be."

"You base that merely on your knowledge of his character?"

"Yes, that is all; but it is sufficient, as anyone intimate with him would allow. He loved life; nothing would so destroy his enjoyment of it as to induce him to commit suicide. No; he has been murdered."

"If that is your conviction, I will go to the police again to-night. They are inclined to think it suicide, and expect it to be so decided at the inquest."

Mr. Whitehead rose from his chair as if to go. Agatha put out her hand to arrest him.

"No!" she said; "let them do what they like, and draw what conclusions they can. I have nothing to say. For my part, I should choose to let his name die out of memory as soon as may be."

"But if he was murdered?"

"It is but a natural end. He did not hesitate to take life. You and I know that this may have been an act of revenge."

"Then you do not wish the police stimulated to exertion at all?"

"Not at all. Some inquiry there must be, I suppose; but let it be as little as possible."

"Yes; there will be the inquest. I cannot go to Ilverton for a day or two, as I shall have a great deal to attend to."

"In that case," said Agatha, "I will go down to Brookwood to-morrow morning. There is no need for me to be in town, is there?"

"None at all. It will be much better for you to be out of the way of these wretched details. I will let you know as soon as I am free to go to Ilverton. And you will come up at once, will you not? as I am anxious to have the formal identification completed as soon as possible."

"Yes; I will come up directly I hear from you. But I should not like to wait here in this hotel; I would rather go home and set my cottage in order again."

"You will not need to be a cottager any longer than you like," said Mr. Whitehead, with a smile of satisfaction. "Upon Lord Vanecourt's table lay his despatch-box and all his papers. Now that I have these in my hands, the situation is quite changed. Although he has squandered your money like water, still he had the sense to make safe a very nice little fortune. This I believe he effected some time ago, anticipating that he might have to take flight at some time or other. A good deal of it seems to be lodged in foreign banks. It is only a question of time now. I feel sure I shall be able to restore it all to you. And, in the meantime, I shall be very glad to advance you any money you may need."

"Oh, I shall need none at present," said Agatha. "I have some jewels still which I have not sold. They will bring me twenty or thirty pounds, no doubt—plenty for me to go on with."

"You need not sell them," said Mr. Whitehead. "There is money here which will cover any imme-

diate necessities. No doubt Lord Vanecourt had it ready for his travelling expenses. It was in the breast-pocket of an ulster which lay upon a chair. Everything was prepared. I feel sure he meant to have left the house in an hour or so, when this strange fate came in his way."

He handed Agatha a pocket-book.

"No," she said, shrinking back a little into her chair; "you keep it."

"I will keep the book if you wish it, and the papers it contains," he said, "but the money will be useful to you, I think. There are about a hundred pounds here in gold and notes. It is your money, remember."

"Well," assented Agatha with a sigh, "take out the money, and I will keep it. But don't leave the pocket-book."

"I will take it with me, then, and look it through. It contains a number of memoranda which I can't make out at present, but they may be of assistance when I have gone through his papers thoroughly."

"Very likely," said Agatha; "keep it, then. And now, Mr. Whitehead, let us agree to use his name as seldom as possible. He is dead; let his memory die. None of us can judge him now."

"Be it so, my dear young lady. I will not forget your wish. But even in the presence of this unhappy event, I cannot help rejoicing that I shall be able ultimately to restore to you some of your own. Don't deny me that pleasure."

"No," said Agatha, with a faint smile, "I will not."

"You would not wonder at it," went on the old lawyer, "if you could realize what my connection with your family has been. I have seen your mother robbed, and her heart broken. I hope the worst of your troubles are over, and I am glad of it."

He rose now to go, for it was getting very late. As Agatha put her hand in his, she felt that in this crusty old lawyer she had a very true friend.

Until late Agatha sat alone thinking.

Mrs. Birchmore came and looked into the room once; but Agatha's face was so sad, and she looked so absorbed in her thoughts, that the old woman went away again silently, shaking her head and mumbling to herself.

At last Agatha roused herself, and rose from her chair. The notes and gold lay upon the table before her. She was ashamed of herself because she shrank from touching them. Conquering the feeling, she approached the table, and took the money up in her hands.

"He is dead!" she said. "None of us can judge him now. And if I can do it, I will prevent the world from ever hearing of his crimes. If Colonel Atman's creed is true, his punishment is yet to come."

She turned away, and went to her bedroom. There she found Mrs. Birchmore waiting for her, more than half asleep; for now that she had no other duties to perform, she insisted on attempting to play the part of lady's maid. But the rôle, which belongs to light comedy, became burlesque in her hands, and Agatha promptly sent her away.

"Bring me some breakfast early to-morrow," she said, "and we will start as soon as ever we are ready. We are going back to Brookwood."

"What!" cried Mrs. Birchmore in dismay, "and me wi'out a look at the shops or streets or anything!"

"Well," said Agatha, smiling at the old woman's disappointment, "you're not obliged to come, you know."

"I ain't a goin' to leave you, Missie, till you don't want me no longer. Nobody else 'd know just how you likes things. I'll foller ye to the end o' the world, Missie, but all the same, I do say it's strange a young lady like you should be fond o' that desolate ole place where a body can't even buy a new cotton frock."

Agatha laughed. "I'll wait till you've bought what you want to-morrow," she said, "there are plenty of shops close by here."

With which concession, Mrs. Birchmore was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER XLIX.

LOVERS.

By the afternoon of the next day Agatha was at home again. She never knew till now, how she had grown to love her cottage and its peaceful, idyllic surroundings. It was indeed like coming home, to return to this quaint little place.

Directly the doors were unlocked Mrs. Birchmore hung up her bonnet on its accustomed peg, lit a fire, and then began to work away, broom in hand. In a very short time the little kitchen began to wear its freshest and cleanest face. When the old woman called to Agatha that tea was ready, she came down the precipitous staircase from her bedroom, to find everything in order. It seemed as if this strange interval of adventure must have been a dream; as if it were only this morning that Leonard had waited for her at the gate, and they had wandered together down the lane to the edge of the forest.

"Them's the cows, I guess," said Mrs. Birchmore, as they heard the yard gate opened, "I caught a brat goin' by and told him to say to Farmer Murchison as you were come back. And the boy, he told me the cows were in Murchison's medder."

Agatha left the table and went to the cottage door. Yes, there were her cows, being driven into the fields beyond the orchard by a peasant lad. Agatha went away over the grass to the field gate; she reached it just as the cows were shut inside. They knew her, and stood close to the gate with their gentle faces towards her; Agatha put her hands on their broad brows.

She stood like this a long while, thinking; her eyes wandered away to the silver streak of the Solent which she could see across the fields, and to the outline of the Isle of Wight, growing dim in the haze of the late afternoon. Presently her thoughts were disturbed by a consciousness she could not understand. She turned quickly and saw Leonard Dering. He was kneeling on the grass, a little distance from her; his paint box was open before him; he was busy sketching.

"Don't move any more!" he exclaimed, "that is just right. I could hardly see your face before."

"Do you expect me to stand for my portrait?" asked Agatha. "What inducement have you to offer?"

"This—that if you will stand still but a little longer, there will be a most delightful sketch in existence of you and your cows."

"How is it you are here?" asked Agatha, "I thought you were in London?"

"I followed you," said Leonard, unblushingly. "I went to your hotel this morning and found you had left. I drove off to Mr. Whitehead's office. He told me you had come here. I returned to my rooms, packed up my portmanteau and my paint box and got down to Brockenhurst an hour ago. I sent my portmanteau and a note to Meredith in a donkey cart, and started to walk to Ferrybridge. I don't pretend that this was the shortest way; but I was on the look out for something to sketch, and you can't deny that I have come the right way for that."

"Did Mr. Whitehead tell you——"

"He told me of Lord Vanecourt's death."

For a little while they said nothing. Leonard went on painting and seemed absorbed in his work; while Agatha stood motionless, her eyes upon him. Her mind had gone back to Colonel Atman; she was recalling his words; she remembered that she had pledged herself to live for Leonard Dering, and remain always by his side. And yet Leonard Dering had never asked her to do this! Her face flushed a little, and her eyes grew bright as they rested on him. For she had the consciousness of his love.

It seemed to Agatha a long time that she stood thus, and Leonard worked on silently. At last he put down his brushes.

"The light is changing," he said, "I can do no more."

He closed his paint box, with the sketch in its lid, and before Agatha had time even to ask to look at it, he was beside her, looking into her face.

"Mr. Whitehead told me another thing," he said, "Sometime ago while I was in the torment of knowing you were a prisoner, and not knowing how to find you, he told me he believed Lord Vanecourt had gambled away most of your fortune, and had so secured the rest that you would not be able to recover it. To-day when I went to him he pointedly asked me if I remembered what he had said? I had no idea the old fellow had so much feeling. I thought he was made of parchment."

"What do you mean?" asked Agatha, bewildered.

"Why, don't you see? Of course he had guessed that I was madly in love with you: he knows I have not a penny in the world, and in fact possess nothing but my wits and my debts. He saw at, once I did not dare to speak to you because I was afraid you might turn out after all to be an heiress. I am not afraid now. In that respect, if in none other we are equals. Agatha, I have talent—that I know; if I work hard as a painter I shall succeed. I will work night and day to win you in the end. I do not ask you to share my fortunes while I am burdened with debts and unable to face the world properly. Till they are paid I mean to live absolutely in my work, if you will but encourage me. I propose to take a barn out here in the forest and convert it into a studio. I shall live like a hermit, on crusts and water, with nothing to distract me from my work. For if you will smile on it, that will not be distraction, but inspiration. Agatha,

promise me that when my debts are paid, you will be my wife. Do not let us waste our youth—let us go to meet the future together!”

Agatha's promise had already been given; she did not hesitate to repeat it now.

“When your debts are paid!” she said, “but you will have to work very hard. And what about going back to India?”

“Oh, I shall resign my commission. The only way I can retrieve my position is by hard work. Do you think I am afraid of that? No; and moreover the work I propose to do seems to me the one thing worth doing in the world? I suppose because it is the one thing I can do.”

“Why have you not worked before?”

“I have; I have been a student in thorough earnest. But my career was arranged for me, and I did not feel sufficiently positive to force myself out of it and into another. My hand had its cunning, but my brain did not conceive. I had not met my inspiration. Now it is different. I am full of thought, full of ideas, full of hope. The future seems grand before me; I long to be at work, to be advancing. And you will help me, Agatha?”

“Yes,” said Agatha, “I will help you.”

It was dusk now; they were walking up and down the path at the side of the orchard. Agatha's heart was beating high with happiness. At first what he had said about the old lawyer bewildered her. But, as she thought of it she understood Mr. Whitehead had given her another proof of his friendship—a strange one, but real. He had purposely misled Leonard Dering into supposing that she was left penniless. For a moment, Agatha was indignant at the subterfuge. But she remembered that Mr. Whitehead knew very little of Leonard Dering personally; that but a few brief days ago, Leonard was still understood to be engaged to the girl who professed to be Lord Vane-court's daughter; and that he had proposed to marry her simply for her money. What wonder Mr. Whitehead should be tempted to test the genuineness of those affections, which were given with such seeming suddenness to the real heiress, the moment she appeared on the scene?

And now, Agatha reflected, as she walked to and fro in the dusk, while Leonard talked to her of his work and of the future—now she had accomplished something which, had she always remained Agatha Vale, could never have been done; she absolutely knew that this man who walked beside her, loved her for herself alone. He believed her to have no greater wealth than that which she could earn by her butter-making. He looked forward, as to an added happiness, to have to work for her, as well as for himself. After all, Agatha decided in her happy heart, this certainty brought a delight with it, which she could never have attained had she always held her own position. She determined to enjoy it as long as possible; she let him talk of the future which he was to create, and breathed no word as to her own possessions. For it was a rare, sweet happiness to hear his words.

Only those who have loved absolutely, unselfishly, know that it is so; but indeed love is more than life.

It was growing dark, and they left the path, crossing the orchard to the cottage door. As they approached it, a dark figure came out of the

lighted interior, and stood in the shadow of the trees, watching them.

“Who is it?” asked Agatha, and then added, as she drew nearer, “Why, it is you, Mr. Meredith! How did you know I was here?”

“I was in Sway hamlet, and they told me you had driven through. I came on directly to tell you how thankful I am to see you safe back again.”

“Thank you, Mr. Meredith,” said Agatha. She put her hand in his, and he grasped it warmly.

“I can never tell you what anxiety I went through when I came back here that day,” he said, “and found the cottage deserted and locked up. And I can never tell you the relief it was to me, when I heard you were safe.”

“And you will never be able to express your astonishment when you hear the whole story,” said Leonard Dering. “I propose to keep you up all night, in order that you shall hear it properly.”

“Now, I want to ask two questions,” said Mr. Meredith, following Agatha, who led the way into the kitchen, which was brightly lit by a blazing wood-fire. “Dering has told me a good deal in the wild, incoherent letters I have had from him lately. But he has not told me by what name we are to call you.”

Agatha sat down in the rocking-chair, and looked for a moment into the blaze of the fire. Then she answered quietly—

“By the name under which I am known here. I never wish to be called by my own. It is best so, I am sure.”

“Well, perhaps so; though it seems a strange decision. What do you think, Dering?”

Mr. Meredith was standing by the hearth close beside Agatha's chair. Leonard had put his paint-box on the table, and opened it to look at his sketch. He looked up after a moment's hesitation.

“I think it is best so,” he said. And then it occurred to Mr. Meredith what associations Agatha's own name must have for her lover!

“Well, then, that is decided. And now, how much am I to tell my mother of your story? She is quite ill with curiosity, and it is a constant and active occupation for me to evade her inquiries. But, though it is a great temptation to me to tell her all I know, and have done with it, I cannot allow myself to forget that what she knows, the whole neighbourhood knows.”

“I am very anxious to avoid any talk, any publicity,” said Agatha.

“In that case,” said Mr. Meredith, “I will only give her selections. Am I to take the responsibility of making those selections myself?”

“Tell her as little as you can,” said Agatha, looking up with a smile. “I trust to you to spare me as far as possible.”

“I will do my best. Poor mother! could she but know what a heroine of romance we have here in our own parish!”

Agatha laughed.

“Very soon I shall be at work on my butter again,” she said, “looking as prosaic as possible. And if people came to stare at me as a heroine of romance, they would be very much disappointed.”

“I don't think they would,” said Mr. Meredith. “What a lovely sketch that is, Dering!”

"Oh, I have not seen it," said Agatha, rising quickly, and coming between them. "It is indeed lovely!" she exclaimed. "How delightful it must be to be able to do such work as that, instead of printing pictures of cows on pats of butter."

"I am glad you like it," said Leonard. "Meredith, you must help me find a barn or something big enough to turn into a studio. I am going to camp out in the forest this winter and work."

"I'll find you a place," said Mr. Meredith; "no fear of that. I shall be only too delighted to have you at work here. Now, do you know, Dering, I really think we must start on our walk home."

"I suppose we must," said Leonard, shutting up his paint-box with a sigh.

They said good-bye to Agatha; and, as they went outside and passed the little lozenge-paned window, both paused an instant to look at the picture she formed sitting there by the cottage-hearth. The vivid light of the wood-flame fell on her face, and lit up her dark hair.

Neither of them had seen her before she had known trouble; but each had the thought in his mind that she could not have been so beautiful in her early, untroubled girlhood as she was now.

After a moment's glance, they turned and walked away arm-in-arm—one an accepted, one a hopeless lover.

(To be continued.)

THE PHYSIC OF OUR FOREFATHERS.

MANY are the quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore which may be found hidden from the gaze of the vulgar, and buried far back on the dusty bookshelves of that great receptacle for the wisdom of our ancestors, the British Museum, and amongst them none perhaps is more worthy of attention from the general reader than the *Ayscough MSS.* The perusal of these manuscripts will be found especially attractive to those interested in the progress of medical science, serving as they do to show that in whatever other respects our forefathers had the advantage of us, it was not in the various modes adopted for the treatment of the sick and the preservation of health. No, in these matters, the so-called good old times certainly left much to be desired.

The cure of hydrophobia, from the earliest times, seems to have alike exercised and baffled the skill of the medical practitioner, nor even at the present day can it really be said that anything has been discovered for the alleviation of this distressing malady. But the writer of the *Ayscough* manuscripts seems to have been puzzled with no such difficulty. To him the cure of disease arising from the "bite of a madd dogg" was a matter of small moment, no less than two infallible remedies are there given; the first being pharmaceutical, the second occult. It were hard to say which is likely to be most efficacious, "a cataplasm made of nutts, with an onion, salt and honey," which, according to the writer, "helpeth the biting of a madd dogg," or the crying out in a loud voice "*Lemus, Lamus, Remus, Ramus, Oxiologe*"—both are highly recommended. There is to be

noticed, moreover, a singular vagueness characterizing these prescriptions. Thus, in the first, it is not easy to determine from the sentence as it stands, whether the cataplasm is intended to assist the "madd dogg" in biting, or his victim in recovery from the effects of the bite; and in the second, no information is vouchsafed as to the time when the words which constitute the charm are to be repeated, nor yet as to whether its efficacy would be the more potent, supposing them spoken before or after the bite.

A "charme," and certain cure for those who are mad, man or beast, is as follows:—"The hair being cut off, lay betony to the mould of the head." Then write on a piece of cheese the words "*Antanbragon Tetragrammaton*," and give it unto the party diseased." What the party so diseased is to do with the cheese thus peculiarly treated, the writer does not say.

Another very common fear in the minds of our forefathers was the dread of being secretly made away with by means of poison, administered either in food or on a prepared weapon. Here is a cure for injuries of the latter kind. "Take a toad and put it in a glass and stop it very close; inclose this glass in some earthen vessel filled full with sand, thereby the better to prevent it breaking; go sett it over the fire till it be consumed to ashes, and apply them to the place wounded, and it is a perfect remedy." If the poison be the result of the bite of a scorpion, however, the better way to obtain relief is to "say to an asse secretly, and as it were whispering in his ear, 'I am bitten with a scorpion,' a cure will result." It might be a question of some nicety to decide whether in the absence of the harmless animal referred to, if the sufferer repeated the words in the ears of the attendant suggesting the remedy a similar favourable result would ensue.

Various are the means and directions given for the cure of that most distressing complaint, colic, so our forefathers, in this respect, were well provided, and might pick and choose. A very simple remedy was a pottage made from the flesh of an "olde decrepit cocke," which has "softer flesh than those which are younger, and is therefore good for the colic passion." Other cures suggested are neither as simple nor as free for objection in practice. In cases of sore throat it is recommended that the dried heads of the vipers be sewn up in a black silk bag and worn round the neck as a charm.

For dysentery the best advice is to pound up the bowl of an old tobacco pipe, and to swallow the powder in any convenient fluid. In cases of epistaxis the remedy would be a leaf of the plant called periwinkle, dried and placed under the tongue. The juice of a pomegranate dropped in the eyes is a useful treatment for yellow jaundice. If the feet of persons suffering from gout be washed with the broth of turnips, it will mitigate the pain. Asparagus will be found useful in cases of stomach-ache, for it "doth mollify the belly gently." Headache is a common enough complaint but it would be rather difficult, not to say unpleasant, for a cure to tie round one's neck, "a halter wherewith a person hath been hanged."

There are numerous specifics given for the cure of agues, complaints by no means uncommon to our forefathers, but one only will be sufficient for mention here—"Take a crust of bread, and write these three words following, and after they be

writ eat them; calida, calidan, calidant; " These directions are simple though not very explicit. The other specifics for ague given in the *Ayscough* manuscripts are a little more complex, but the reader is assured they will be found equally efficacious.

And now to conclude our extracts from this curious old volume with the following method whereby "to release a woman in travel." It should have been popular with the obstetric practitioner of the period. He had simply, no matter how tedious the labour, to throw over the top of the house where a "woman in travel" lay, a stone or any other thing that had killed three living creatures—namely, "a man, a wild boar, and a sheebear." It is a matter of some surprise, that so safe and speedy a method of delivery in childbirth should have become obsolete; but possibly a reason may be found in the difficulty which would be felt in procuring a "stone or any other thing" fulfilling the necessary requirements, or perhaps even the uncertainty of the result may have contributed to this end. J.G.

ON MAKING A POINT OF IT.

WHENEVER a man or woman gets into the habit of saying "I always make a point of it," we may safely look out for something prickly. Indeed, if it were pardonable to imagine what kind of proverbial remark Sam Weller would have made on the question, it might be suggested that he would have said "Only making a point of it, as the thistle said, when it stuck in the young lady's hand."

As far as can be ascertained, the original persons who made a point of it were afflicted with bad memories. A knot in the pocket-handkerchief, a bit of string round the finger, a piece of paper wrapped round your keys, are some of the ingenious ways in which modern persons so afflicted endeavour to remember. The Greeks and Romans had a different way. They made a puncture on a tablet of wood, or metal, or a leaf, and it served to remind them of engagements, or of prominent events. They made a point of it.

If Mrs. Punctilio were to carry a card about with her, and make a point on it as often as she uses the phrase, she would have to hold it in her hand in a long conversation, and bystanders would fancy she were pricking out a pattern. The good lady uses the phrase to illustrate her own virtues, and the virtues of her lamented husband. It is said—though one does not like to repeat scandal—that poor Mr. Punctilio was led such a life that he died early: a victim to his wife's superior virtue. His wife used him as a pin-cushion, in which to stick her moral, ecclesiastical, financial, domestic, and general comments, until human nature could endure no more.

Persons of the type of Mrs. Punctilio are very common, and often very difficult to live with, or to tolerate. It is unpleasant to feel that we invariably suffer by their suggested comparisons, and that all our belongings are inferior likewise.

The old maid, who is such a perfect manager, is rather a familiar personage. She always makes a point of ringing up her servants at a particular hour; of surprising them, now and then, by coming down stairs before she has been called; of sitting on a chair in the middle of the drawing-room, to see that Maria dusts it properly, and arranges everything in order; of leaving money

about in odd places, to test the honesty of her maids; and of doing everything in an awkward, irritating, and suspicious manner. She is all points. But, to her credit, be it said, her maids are well trained, and when they leave her they get better situations.

"I always make a point of never wasting anything!" Men and women who use this little speech, go off into absurd extremes, and become collectors of rubbish and antiquities—personal and domestic antiquities, we mean. Old string, old envelopes, old bits of carpet, old gloves, and other odds and ends, are preserved, not for any useful purpose, but merely for the sake of saving. Nero scarcely belonged to this class, and yet he saved up the hairs he had cut from his chin the first time he shaved, to show that he had once been a boy!

There is scarcely an inconvenient or disagreeable habit which is not excused by the saying about making a point of it. The sight-seers, who chip off bits of every ancient thing they see, who cut their names on trees, or on green hill-tops, or pencil their signatures on door-posts, windmills, and other places, would be more reasonable if they refrained from being quite so anxious for collecting curiosities, and earning immortality.

"I always make a point of telling him he's looking better," is a common remark one hears about some asthmatic, consumptive, or dyspeptic person. The victim learns to understand the value of these compliments, and to trust to two infallible authorities, not intent on making points—namely, his sensations, and his looking-glass.

Compliments of all kinds, frequently repeated, may be considered as points; and they are disagreeable in proportion to their obvious trickiness and insincerity. Some people, however, are really pleased when the pert, or the cunning, make a point of praising their dress, their looks, their behaviour, their style, their dainty compositions. We once knew a man whose friends made a point of bestowing a little praise upon him every day, in connection with something or other, and excused themselves by saying, in private: "You know, dear, papa would be miserable, and so should we, but for this judicious treatment." He lived on points.

Points of this kind do not strike most persons as desirable things to make. But we may easily draw up a list of matters all persons should be anxious to make a point of. Here are a few, selected at random. Never to be rude to any one, to lose one's temper, to make rash promises, to keep other people waiting, to spend sixpence where less would suffice, to praise one's self in company, to backbite one's friends, to forget a kindness, to be disrespectful to the venerable, and to imitate Mrs. Punctilio.

The happy mean between making a point of it, and making a point of nothing, is not difficult to hit. No grammar is required to instruct us in it. It is mainly a matter of common sense. In making points, it is not necessary to tell everybody about them, or to be uncivil and bearish in speaking one's mind, for truth need not be all prickles. Character speaks for itself, without incessant punctuation. But, on the other hand, there is no need to be pointless and common-place. Good habits are points, and there can be no individual force unless we have a way of our own of doing many things.

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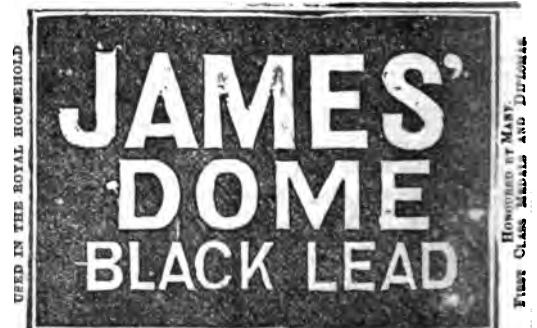
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PRETTY MADGE TIFFEN.

BY M. L. BARRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEW LODGER.

SCENE. A scantily-furnished room in a dismal little back street in the London suburbs, known as Solferino Place. Present. Mr. Tiffen, a fat, rubicund man, of fifty or thereabouts, reclining in an easy chair before a dull fire; the *Telegraph* spread out before him, and a long clay pipe in his mouth. In the very cool recess of a bay window facing the misty, woe-begone street a pale, worn-looking woman was seated on a rickety chair, sewing diligently. This was Mrs. Tiffen. A pretty girl, with a bright, vivacious face, and head running over with crisp dark curls, was working at a sewing-machine in the opposite recess of the window. An active, impulsive, eager young creature you would say on seeing her, and such, in truth, she was. Madge Tiffen—only child of Mr. and Mrs. Tiffen aforesaid—was irrepressibly vivacious and active; ever ready to work and never seeming tired.

It was a raw, misty September day. Solferino Place, as viewed from the parlour window of Mr. Tiffen's residence, presented an extremely depressing aspect; its dreary rows of two-storied red-bricked houses, with crumbling walls and battered and defaced porticoes, seeming to tell—as well as bricks and mortar could tell—the sad story of the lives of their needy but genteel occupants. Nearly in every window cards were exhibited announcing apartments to let, a circumstance that was dismally suggestive of more than ordinary financial pressure in the households of Solferino Place at the present period.

"Will the poor-rate call again, mother?" inquired Madge, as she paused in her work for a moment, and leant back in her chair.

"Hush!" replied Mrs. Tiffen, nodding in the

direction of her husband, as if fearing lest he should overhear them. "Be careful, my dear," she continued in a low tone. "The least thing disturbs his heart." After pausing for a moment, she added with a sigh, "The poor-rate won't call again. We've received the last notice."

"More of those nasty pieces of blue paper, I suppose," said Madge cautiously. Her mother nodded. "Perhaps we'll finish this dress by to-morrow, and that will be fifteen shillings in our purse," she continued. "And, who knows? we may succeed in letting one of the rooms: A large spider crawled across the table while we were at breakfast this morning." Mrs. Tiffen smiled. "Spiders have never disappointed us, mammy," she continued with tender playfulness. "Don't you recollect that—"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Tiffen abruptly, as he threw his paper aside and rose to his feet, "it is simply appalling to read the heartrending accounts of the sufferings of the poor at this time of year. It is enough to make a man of feeling forget his appetite—it is indeed!" Having delivered this noble sentiment with earnest eloquence, he folded his arms "Napoleonically," and strode to and fro over the ragged carpet with the air and mien of one absorbed in gloomy reverie.

He presented a striking figure in many respects. His bald, massive head and lofty brow suggested benevolent potentialities of the most impressive order; and, though less impressive, and by no means suggestive of anything sublime or beautiful, his plump, ruddy cheeks, and bulgy, bluish nose, lent a certain festive significance to his face that was not without its charm. Carelessly attired in a loose-fitting black velvet jacket, rather too short for a man of his age and proportions, by the way, and with slippers of the most accommodating kind on his feet, it can be easily imagined that a general air of comfort and freedom characterised Mr. Tiffen's dress.

"Ah! Nell," he said, looking at his wife and addressing her in a tone of cheery remonstrance, "ever wool-gathering, my dear, ever letting your

mind wander away from your work." She had been resting herself for a little time. "Recollect! a moment lost is lost for ever!" he added impressively.

"I'm afraid that I'm in rather an idle mood to-day, Percy," she answered, as she resumed her work.

"Well, we didn't get to bed until one o'clock this morning, so you ought to feel tired, mammy," remarked Madge.

"Madge Tiffen, have you forgotten Shakespeare's lines—

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily trent the stile—a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
A sad tires in a mile—a.

"That's the true secret of success in this life," he added. "Working with a merry heart—day and night if necessary." After a moment's pause, he asked if his beef-tea was ready, and his daughter left the room to fetch it for him.

It must be known that Mr. Tiffen insisted upon being regarded as a confirmed invalid, and expected to be taken the greatest care of by his wife and child. "It's a curious circumstance," he resumed, as he seated himself at the table with a basin of beef-tea before him, "that my poor heart fairly wobbles about from weakness if my food is a minute behind time. I have warned you both about that often enough, but——" he shook his head dolefully, and proceeded with his luncheon.

"Dear me! a hansom!" exclaimed Mrs. Tiffen, pointing to a cab, which was moving slowly up the street. "There's a young man in it too!" she added. "Surely he's not looking for lodgings."

Madge rose and stood at the window. "He is, mother!" she exclaimed, unable to repress her anxiety. "See, the cab is coming here! There! I told you so. I knew that that spider would bring us luck!" and she rushed out of the room, for the stranger had alighted, and had rapped at the door.

He was a tall, good-looking, stylishly attired young man, and, as far as appearance went, he was infinitely superior to the class of lodger familiar to the householders of Solferino Place.

He looked in a careless way at the drawing-room, as it was called, and adjoining bed-room, and agreed without demur to pay twenty-five shillings a week for them. His manner was off-hand, prompt; as of a man who was in the habit of having his own way in most things without being compelled to consider the cost.

Mr. Tiffen was anxiously awaiting Madge's report on the subject of their new lodger.

"Well, my dear, what do you think of him?" he inquired, when she had returned to the parlour.

"He is by far and away the most distinguished-looking lodger we've had. And he seems to be rich too. He agreed to pay twenty-five shillings a week without a moment's hesitation," she replied, as she went up to her mother and kissed the meek, pale-faced woman tenderly.

"Did you get a deposit?" asked her father. Madge shook her head. "But we must have one. You can't be too careful, you know, in these cases," he added, shaking his head gravely.

"He is so liberal and——" commenced Madge in a tone of remonstrance.

"Bosh, my child, bosh! We must have a deposit," cried out the invalid peevishly.

Much against her own wish, Madge went upstairs to give effect to her father's instructions.

Tapping lightly at the door, she opened it, and entered the room.

Mr. Thornhill, she had seen the name on the trunks, was evidently not aware of her presence. He was leaning over the table, with his head buried in his hands.

"Please, sir——" she commenced timidly.

He looked up at her, his eyes wet with tears, and an expression of vivid anguish upon his handsome face.

"What do you want?" he asked in a tone of angry impatience.

"A deposit——"

He flung a sovereign on the table, saying, "Is that enough?"

The colour mounted to her face; but she merely bowed as she took the money and left the room.

CHAPTER II.

"HARD LINES."

MR. THORNHILL proved a very satisfactory lodger in every respect. He gave but little trouble and paid his bills with regularity and without question, which was very agreeable to Madge, whose duty it was to attend to such matters.

For the first few weeks she was at a loss to understand the nature of his occupation; for he remained in all day, either walking restlessly about his room or writing with such intense application that even the noise of her sewing-machine distracted him, a circumstance that she promptly remedied on being informed of it. The conviction was at length forced upon her mind that he was a writer; and she had no sooner formed this opinion than she conceived the loftiest ideas of his ability, deciding off-hand that he was a genius of the first rank, at present occupied in a work which was destined to immortalize his name. Why she should have arrived at such a very favourable conclusion as this was not at all clear even to herself; she merely knew that it pleased her to do so, and that her feelings would have rebelled against an opposite verdict.

She saw with concern that Mr. Thornhill was beginning to look very haggard and anxious, and it occurred to her that he was overworking himself. She knew that it was his custom to remain up until a late hour every night, writing incessantly; and this, too, after several hours' hard work during the day. Whenever she entered the room she found him bending over the table, writing with an air of intense application that greatly impressed her, though it caused her no little anxiety too.

Within a month after his arrival, several rolls of what appeared to be a manuscript were returned to him, and on each occasion when the post brought these she observed a cloud of disappointment upon his face, which told its own story. But she never lost faith in him—on the contrary, these tokens of failure seemed rather to strengthen her belief in the ultimate success of his efforts. And they were also very fruitful of tender feelings of sympathy for him in his manly struggles for fame, if not for fortune.

It was not until close upon the end of October that a certain conjunction of circumstances suggested very painful thoughts to her mind as to Mr. Thornhill's means. He suddenly altered his style of living, which had hitherto been rather extravagant and generous; henceforth it was clearly his purpose to live more economically, and with this object in view he grew more sparing in the use of coals and ceased to indulge in such luxuries as eggs and bacon for breakfast. A still more ominous sign of impecuniosity than this came under Madge's notice. She observed that a handsome diamond ring and pin which he used to wear had disappeared, and the conviction was forced on her mind that he had been compelled to raise money upon these articles for his present needs.

She made no mention of these things to her parents; indeed, she was anxious that they should know nothing of Mr. Thornhill's difficulties, and as the sole management of household affairs rested with her, she hoped to succeed in keeping the matter to herself.

"Has the post come yet?" he asked, when she entered the room one evening with his tea.

"Not yet, sir," she replied, raising her blue expressive eyes to his face in a glance of sympathy.

"I don't want anything to eat," he said, "Leave me a cup of tea, and take the other things down stairs again."

His manner was unusually stern and abrupt, and Madge's eyes brightened with tears as she turned from him to leave the room.

Suddenly he rose from his chair, and touched her lightly on the shoulder.

"I hope you are not angry with me," he said in a tenderly contrite tone, as he fixed his dark eyes on her face inquiringly. She tried to speak, but her voice failed her, and she could only look at him in a helpless, beseeching way. "I am worried," he resumed, "and I scarcely know what I am about at times." He paused. Madge became more composed. "Am I forgiven?" he added, his voice betraying much emotion.

Madge murmured "Yes," and left the room, palpitating with joy.

By the last post that evening a large roll of manuscript was returned. She hesitated before taking it upstairs, unwilling to inflict the inevitable disappointment that was in store for him. As she paused in the hall, with the manuscript in her hand, he came out of his room, and inquired if the post had brought anything for him. So she had to go up-stairs.

"For heaven's sake, child, let me have these things at once," he said, taking the parcel out of her hand, and flinging it fiercely from him to the other end of the room. "Anything is better than the agony of suspense," he added, in a lower tone, as he threw himself into a chair, and buried his face in his hands.

Her heart was deeply affected by the evidence of his suffering, and she longed to say something comforting to him—something that would soothe his wounded spirit, and inspire hope. But she was afraid to do so. As she was about to leave the room, he raised his head and beckoned her to stay.

"I feel a little nervous, and out of sorts to-night," he said, smiling faintly, "and I think it would do me good to have a chat with some one. I

can't ask you to stop—would that I dare!" And he raised his eyes to hers with inquiring tenderness. After a moment's pause, he added, "Would that fat old gentleman mind spending an hour or so with me?"

"Do you mean my father?" and she smiled as she put the question.

"O, is that your father? the jolly-looking old fellow in the velvet jacket?" She laughed, and nodded. "Then kindly present my compliments—"

"I'll tell the fat old gentleman, the jolly old fellow in the velveteen—not velvet—jacket, that you wish to see him," she cried out, with a merry laugh, as she tripped lightly to the door, deaf to his remonstrances and apologies.

"Ah! does Mr. Thornhill desire the companionship of a kindred spirit—of a devotee of literature?" exclaimed Mr. Tiffen, gaily, when Madge delivered her message. "I'll give him a taste of the Tiffen philosophy," he added, as he rose from his easy-chair, where he had been seated all the evening, smoking and reading.

"Don't excite yourself, darling," said his wife, affectionately, as she raised her eyes from her work, and looked admiringly at him. "You know you're not strong," she added, with a sigh.

"I know I'm not, dearest; but you needn't neglect your work to tell me so. Ah! what an artful puss it is!" And he playfully pinched his wife's pale, thin face with his fat fingers. "By the way, Madge, what drink has he got up-stairs?"

"Whisky—nearly half a bottle."

"Only half a bottle for two! That's rather mean; but life is made up of sacrifices:" and so saying, he left the parlour, and was soon comfortably seated in an easy-chair in Frank Thornhill's room; a stiff glass of grog at his elbow, and his long clay pipe in his mouth.

"I'm sorry I haven't a cigar to offer you, Mr. Tiffen," said Thornhill, politely, as he rolled up a cigarette for himself.

"Don't mention it, I beg of you, Mr. Thornhill. As a matter of fact, my doctors won't allow me to smoke cigars."

"Oh, indeed! what's the matter?"

"Heart," replied Tiffen, with mysterious solemnity. "Fatty degeneration," he added, tapping his waistcoat with expressive concern.

"I'm sorry to hear it; I suppose a complaint of that kind incapacitates a man from work."

"As a rule it does; but I don't give way to it to that extent. Work, with me, is a passion. I can't rest. My mind, so to speak, is in a perpetual ferment:" and, so saying, Mr. Tiffen drank off his grog, and proceeded at once to replenish his glass; assuming an air of abstraction as he poured in the whisky, which, curiously enough, resulted almost in the emptying of the bottle.

"Are you engaged in commercial pursuits, Mr. Tiffen?" asked Thornhill, after a short pause.

Tiffen shook his head, and smiled with a knowing air. "No, I couldn't stand the excitement of commerce. I belong to the school of thinkers, Thornhill."

"Have you published anything?" eagerly inquired the lodger.

"Not yet, but"—with aggravating reticence he paused on the verge of what would have proved surely a most interesting revelation;

adding in a low tone, and with impressive solemnity, "Would *you* like to be buried in Westminster Abbey, Mr. Thornhill?" The young man nodded, and smiled. "Then you'll have to work for it—work night and day."

"But I do work, Mr. Tiffen," said the lodger earnestly, as he ran his fingers through his hair, with an air of weariness.

"I can't tolerate lazy people," continued Mr. Tiffen, leaning back in his easy chair, and smoking with deliberate enjoyment. "It is one of the sorest and bitterest trials of my life to see the amount of precious time that is wasted under this very roof of mine by my wife and child," he added in an injured tone.

"Well, you can't very well expect women——"

"Excuse me, young gentleman, I know what you are about to say, but first listen to me for a moment. Here are two strong, active women, in the full enjoyment of robust health. Owing to the slackness of the lodging business, we find it necessary to go in for dressmaking, and with a little energy and industry we might do very well at it. My delicate condition, and the need of supplying me with those little luxuries so dear to the heart of an invalid, would, you might naturally suppose, urge Mrs. Tiffen and my daughter to exert themselves. But do they do so? Alas! no. When I tell you that I have frequently to struggle on without my drop of rum and milk at seven o'clock in the morning, and my cup of beef tea in the forenoon, you will have some conception of my sufferings," and, sighing heavily, Mr. Tiffen resorted to his glass for consolation.

Thornhill murmured a few words of sympathy, and observing that his landlord's eyes were fixed with mournful expressiveness on the empty bottle, at once sent for a fresh supply of whisky. This had an amazing effect on Mr. Tiffen's spirits; and having replenished his glass, refilled his pipe, and settled himself comfortably in the easy chair, he trolled out his favourite lines:

Jog on, jog on the footpath way,
And merrily trent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
A sad tires in a mile-a.

"Ah! yes, he added meditatively, "that's very true. I never give way to my troubles—never!"

"I think you are right, Mr. Tiffen. At the same time it's deuced hard to be merry when one is——" Thornhill stopped, and sighed heavily.

"Nonsense," broke in his companion. "Take my word for it, Mr. Thornhill, that the man or woman who gives way to despondency is doomed. Again I say, work, work, work. Nothing like hard, unceasing toil to cure people of melancholia."

"O! I'm not depressed, pray don't think that, nor am I afraid of work," said Thornhill, evidently striving to appear cheerful.

"And, as I often say to my wife," continued Tiffen airily, "look at the rewards of labour! How sweet the bread of industry! And then there is the glorious satisfaction of being able to look the whole world in the face, feeling perfectly independent. Ah! Mr. Thornhill, how beautifully Bobby Burns expresses that sentiment. Listen." Taking a hearty pull at his glass, Tiffen proceeded,

To catch Dame Fortune's golden smile
Assiduous wait upon her!

And gather gear by every wile
That's justified by honour.
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Not for a train attendant,
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

"In other words, Mr. Thornhill, make a fortune!" he added, with hearty emphasis.

"Yes," replied Thornhill gloomily, "without money, one is helpless and friendless!"

With much display of sincerity, Tiffen stretched forth his hand, saying, "Not friendless, my son, not friendless!"

Thornhill was evidently not accustomed to outbursts of this kind, but he took the outstretched hand—coldly and reluctantly—as if the proceeding was altogether distasteful to him.

After this affecting incident, Tiffen became more enamoured of the whisky bottle than ever, and in the course of an hour or so succeeded in making himself tipsy.

At twelve o'clock Madge appeared; and led her father away.

"What on earth is the matter with you Percy, darling?" cried poor Mrs. Tiffen, when he staggered into the parlour.

"Heart again!" he muttered.

"There's more whisky than heart about it," said Madge angrily, as she helped her mother to assist the invalid to his room.

No improvement took place in Frank Thornhill's affairs. With aching heart Madge watched for some ray of hope, but the days passed by, and no token of success appeared, while the gloom of disappointment grew deeper and deeper. Within a week from the meeting with her father, Mr. Thornhill gave up the drawing-rooms and moved into a single apartment, which was furnished as a bed and sitting-room. He worked day and night with feverish energy, but his MSS. were still returned with dismal regularity.

Before the middle of November, Madge missed his watch and chain; and thereafter she observed that various articles of clothing also disappeared in a mysterious manner from his room. Poor fellow! he was evidently getting poorer and poorer every day.

Encouraged by the friendly way in which her father had referred to Mr. Thornhill several times, she decided to ask him to let their lodger occupy the room free from the payment of rent until he was in a position to pay it without inconvenience. Nothing could equal her father's indignation on hearing this proposal. He characterized it as the most selfish and unfeeling one that he had ever heard, and warned Madge to see that "that fellow Thornhill didn't walk off some fine day in their debt."

Late in the afternoon of a cold, dismal November day, Madge entered Mr. Thornhill's cheerless room. He was seated before the fireless grate, pale and haggard, with an expression of utter weariness in his dark eyes, which were wont to sparkle with such fire and animation.

"I find," he said in a formal tone—he had become very cold and distant lately—"that I shall have to try and get a smaller room than this—a cheaper room in fact. Have you got such a one unoccupied?"

"Well, we—" Madge could scarcely keep the tears back—"we have a very small room right at

the top of the house, which we let sometimes." It was the attic, but she didn't like to say so.

"How much a week do you let it for?"

"Half-a-crown. But you needn't move there, Mr. Thornhill, until we let this room. You are welcome to remain here for that rent."

He started from his chair, saying, in his old abrupt way, "No thank you. I didn't come here to be either patronized or pitied. I am under no obligation to you or to anybody else, and I have no desire to be."

"I beg your pardon," she said in a husky tone, and left the room.

"Going to live in the attic!" exclaimed her father, when she told him of this. "Confound the man, he'll end on the roof!" he added, much to Madge's disgust.

Before the close of November, Mr. Thornhill moved to the attic; which Madge had made as comfortable as she could for him.

He had become more distant and cold than ever to her, and this cut her to the heart; but her feelings were unchanged. She wept in secret over his troubles, and prayed to heaven nightly in his behalf.

CHAPTER III.

TO THE RESCUE.

A BITTERLY cold day in December. The snow falling in heavy flakes from a dull, grey sky, enveloping the vast city in a dazzling white shroud—beautiful enough to look at from the shelter of a cheerful, comfortable home, but as merciless as death itself to those who were exposed to its icy, penetrating cold.

Mr. Tiffen was in bad humour to-day, indeed for the last few weeks his temper had been very trying to everybody. This was mainly due to the inability of his wife and child to provide him with those luxuries—such as beef-tea and rum and milk—which his delicate condition of health required. And things were not mending; in fact Madge had to confess that Mr. Thornhill was two weeks in arrear with his rent, and that he saw no immediate prospect of being able to meet the debt, which was increasing every day.

"It's shameful conduct!" he cried out indignantly from his arm-chair, where he was seated as usual before the fire, his wife and Madge being in the recess of the bay window, plying their needles diligently. "This fellow, Thornhill, with all his West-end airs and flashy style, comes here and sponges on poor hard-working people, who can scarcely keep body and soul together! I say again it's shameful conduct!" And he took the poker up and made a fierce onslaught on the fire, to relieve his over-charged feelings.

"It's not Mr. Thornhill's fault, papa. He tries very hard—" Madge's lip trembled—"tries very hard," she repeated with earnest emphasis, "to pay his way."

"No doubt," he replied, with a sneer. "But what satisfaction is that to me if I have to go without my beef-tea."

"We'll try and make you some to-morrow, Percy dear," said his wife, soothingly. "Do you feel better to-day?" she added, raising her eyes from her work and looking lovingly at him.

"Better!" he repeated, in a tone of indignation.

"I feel pretty well starved between you. Yes, Ellen Tiffen, I little thought when I gave you my hand and heart that you would neglect me in this cruel manner."

"I have always done my best for you, Percy," she said, with a sigh, as she resumed her work.

"At any rate," he resumed, "we'll not be imposed upon much longer by that dishonest and selfish cad upstairs. If he doesn't pay up next week I'll kick him out of the house."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," said Madge, her face flushing with anger. "Mr. Thornhill paid us very liberally for the drawing-rooms and we've had a lot of money of him since he came here. It would be a mean and paltry thing now to treat him unkindly because he is unfortunate."

"And is it not unkind, girl, to deprive your father, who is afflicted by heaven with fatty degeneration of the heart, of those—"

"There, there!" cried out Madge, impatiently; "we'll give you beef-tea to-morrow; and, like a good Papsy, don't say any more of those unkind things about poor Mr. Thornhill, who is striving—oh, so bravely and patiently!—to earn a living."

Her voice grew strangely soft and tender when she referred to Thornhill; and, as she resumed her work, the tears started into her eyes, and coursed down her cheeks.

She was getting quite alarmed now about Mr. Thornhill. During the last few weeks he had changed greatly, his appearance denoting, not only much mental suffering, but great physical exhaustion, due no doubt to want of the common necessities of life. He had evidently disposed of all his available property—even his top-coat had vanished—and only to-day he left the house in a blinding snow-storm, clad in ordinary walking-attire, which could ill protect him from the biting cold of wind and snow. And she could do nothing for him! He resented anything savouring of sympathy; refused, with unbending pride, the little delicacies which she sought to press upon him; and gave her to understand, in the most unmistakable manner, that her kindly efforts to alleviate his condition were not welcome. And yet, at the same time, he did this so as to convey the impression that he was not ungrateful to her for what she desired to do, and that he merely rejected her kindness because it involved a substantial obligation, which he was not willing to contract.

But her generous instincts were not easily subdued. He might reject her offers of help, but she would continue to make them. Her love was as strong and determined as his pride.

Having finished her dressmaking work, she went to the little room at the top of the house, and sought to make it as comfortable and cosy as possible for its occupant. She lit a good fire, placed an easy-chair before it, which she had moved from one of the other rooms, and propped up his slippers against the fender, so that he might find them warm on his return. The whitest of table-cloths graced the tiny table in the middle of the room, and all the preparations for tea were set forth thereon in the trimmest and most inviting style. Taking a final glance at the bright, cosy little room, she went downstairs to await the return of Mr. Thornhill.

Eight, nine, ten o'clock, and yet he had not

returned. What could have become of him? He had never been so late before. Her heart throbbed with anxiety as she sat alone by the parlour-window, watching for his return. Unable to bear the suspense of waiting indoors, she went outside, and stood on the pavement, heedless of the snow which was still falling in dense clouds. Then she walked a little distance up the street, and paused, striving with eager gaze to peer through the grey, whirling mist. Yes; she could not be mistaken. A dark object was clinging to the railings within a few feet of her.

She approached, and a low cry of agony escaped from her as she recognized Frank Thornhill.

"My strength failed me," he muttered, as he entered the house, leaning on her arm.

She could not persuade him to eat anything; indeed he was scarcely able to lift a cup of tea to his lips. There he sat, with pale, haggard face and trembling limbs, staring in silence at the fire.

Madge saw at a glance that he was ill.

"Is there anything I can get for you?" she asked, striving to control her emotions.

He shook his head.

"I'm afraid you're not well," she continued. "Let me send for a doctor."

"No, no, no!" he muttered. After a moment's silence, he raised his eyes to her face, and said, "You have been very good to me."

She turned her face away to hide the tears that were trickling down her cheeks.

He caught her hand and pressed it to his lips, saying, in a low, intense voice—

"God bless you, Madge—dear, dear Madge!"

Then he fell back in his chair, and covered his face with his hands; and she left the room, and seated herself on the stairs outside, where she spent the night, oppressed with anxious fears.

On the following day, Thornhill was unable to rise, and unmistakable symptoms of illness manifested themselves.

Madge, without consulting him or any one else, fetched in a local doctor, who pronounced the case to be one of low fever of a very serious nature, and warned Madge to prepare for the worst consequences. This dreadful news paralyzed her for a moment, but the desire to save his life predominated over every other feeling; and recovering from the first shock, she devoted herself, heart and soul, to that purpose.

Day and night she watched at his bedside; now cooling his fevered brow, now trying with urgent tenderness to persuade him to take nourishment. Fortunately she had by her a small sum—fifteen shillings—which represented the savings of months, and with which she meant to purchase a warm dress for the winter. This enabled her to procure the various delicacies ordered by the doctor; of course, the need of a dress—a pressing need, too, by the way—was completely forgotten.

It was very grateful to her heart to be called "Madge," by the sick man; and his voice, too, when he uttered her name, seemed so strangely sweet and tender. At times, especially during the weary hours of night, he became delirious, and rambled on in the wildest way. But she rarely failed to pacify him. Ah! it was a touching scene to see that young creature, in the dim-lighted little room, her arm supporting the sick

man's head, as he strove to sit up in his bed during these attacks. And then with what gentle words she won him back to reason! And how tenderly she laid his weary head upon the pillow again! But, oh! how sweet her reward when she heard him murmuring in the darkness; "Madge, dear, dear Madge!"

On the seventh day, the doctor said that his friends ought to be communicated with, and looked through his pocket-book for some address to which they might write, Thornhill himself refusing to give them any information on the subject.

"I'll not put up with this any longer," said Tiffen, who met the doctor at the foot of the stairs, as he came from the sick-room. "The fellow must be packed off to the hospital. What's his hospital Sunday for, I should like to know?"

"I'm going to call at once at an address which I found up-stairs; perhaps there'll be no occasion to turn him out after all," replied the doctor, with a smile, as he left the house.

"An infernal pauper comes here, and sponges on hard-working people—oh, it's a cruel shame!" resumed Mr. Tiffen, when he entered the parlour.

"What is?" inquired his wife, raising her eyes from her work.

"What is? Why the way I am neglected in this house by my wife and child, while that lazy brute up-stairs is pampered on the fat of the land. The fellow isn't ill at all, I suspect. He's only shamming!" and Mr. Tiffen, puffing and blowing with anger, strode about the room.

It was close upon five in the afternoon, when a handsomely appointed carriage drove into Solferino Place. Tiffen saw it as it stopped before his house. In a moment the truth flashed upon his mind. Ordering his wife to answer the door, he ran up-stairs to the sick-room, whispered to Madge that a lot of swells had just arrived in a carriage, and ordered her to make herself tidy; whereupon she left the room, and he took her place at the bed-side. Thornhill was dozing.

In a few minutes a gentle tap at the door announced a visitor. "Hush!" whispered Tiffen, as an amiable-looking woman, with snow-white hair, looked into the room. It gladdened Tiffen's heart to see the costly nature of her dress;—"rich people" he thought, with a sly chuckle. She entered the room, looked for a moment at the sick man, her face working with suppressed emotion, and tears trickling down her cheeks. Then, unable to restrain herself, she rushed to the bed-side, and falling upon her knees, cried out in tones of piercing anguish, "My darling boy—my darling boy!"

Putting his handkerchief to his face, Tiffen left the room. He found his wife outside. "Colonel Thornhill is in the drawing-room," she whispered. He went down stairs at once.

"Mr. Tiffen I presume," said a fine, hearty-looking old fellow, shaking the landlord warmly by the hand. "How is Frank, sir—how is my poor boy," he continued with emotion.

"I think we'll pull him through. Of course it's a case that requires great care, but you can depend on me." Again Tiffen's hand received a hearty shake. "I can assure you he is as dear to me as if he were my own son," he continued. "I have watched him through the long hours of the silent night, I have." He hesitated, adding with a shrug "but that doesn't matter."

"But it *does* matter Mr. Tiffen," cried out the old soldier, wringing Tiffen's hand with affectionate warmth. "You'll not find me ungrateful, sir," he added. "Your noble conduct shall never be forgotten by Frank Thornhill's father."

"Don't speak of such things to me, sir," replied Tiffen, in a low feeble voice, raising his hand to his face to conceal his emotion.

"The difference between Frank and myself arose in this way," said Colonel Thornhill, as they seated themselves on the sofa. "He wanted to throw up his commission in the Army. I objected; he persisted; and then followed a violent quarrel between us, which terminated in his leaving home, and trying to earn his own living. I was a fool to have forced the matter to that point but—"

"Excuse me, Colonel Thornhill—could you speak in a lower tone?" said Tiffen, with an amiable smile, "I musn't forget *my* patient, you know," he added.

"Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness," replied the Colonel. "Well," he resumed in a whisper, "the boy is his mother's pet—indeed he is an only child—and—and—for the future he shall have his own way. Of that I am determined."

Mrs. Thornhill now entered the room; gave a hopeful account of Frank; and proceeded at once to make arrangements for the greater comfort of the patient. Mrs. Tiffen received ten pounds to buy things for him; a professional nurse was engaged; and a celebrated doctor from the West End was sent for. Mrs. Thornhill herself insisted upon remaining at Solferino Place until Frank was out of danger.

Madge was kept in the back-ground. It was enough for her to know that he was making favourable progress daily. His mother and his friends (many carriages called daily) were with him now; and why should she try to force herself on the attention of these grand people? He asked for her every day, and she went to his bed-side, and expressed a hope that he was better—and then retired, despite his entreaties that she should remain.

On the twenty-first of December, Thornhill was reported to be strong enough to return home. On that eventful day, he was in the drawing-room with his parent, Mr. and Mrs. Tiffen, and the doctor, and a few friends who had come over from the West End.

The Colonel was congratulating the doctor (the local man) on the skill which he had shown, and thanking him warmly for his successful efforts.

"It seems to me," said the doctor with a smile, "that we are all forgetting the person to whom thanks are chiefly due in this matter." Tiffen looked hurt. "Mr. Thornhill's life was preserved as much by good nursing during the first week of his illness as by successful doctoring. But I don't see the little nurse here, who remained up night after night with him?"

Tiffen coughed, and sent his wife out of the room.

"I know all about Miss Tiffen's goodness to my son—he has told me everything," said Mrs. Thornhill, exchanging significant glances with Frank, who was strangely reserved and silent.

Mrs. Tiffen couldn't persuade Madge to come

down-stairs to say "Good-bye" to Mr. Thornhill, so he left with his friends without seeing her.

* * * * *

Christmas Day. Madge sat alone in her bedroom, feeling sick-at-heart and aweary of the world. Ah! Frank, Frank. . . .

Suddenly her mother entered the room and said, "Some one wants to see you, dear—in the drawing-room."

She went down stairs, opened the door, and saw Frank Thornhill before her.

"Madge, did you think that I had forgotten you?" he asked, bending over her.

"Yes." She had not the courage to look at him; and how her heart throbbed!

"Then you wronged me, Madge; look at me!" and he placed his hands on her shoulders; and they stood facing one another; Madge's blue eyes glistening with tears. "My darling!" he continued. "My good, faithful, loving darling!" And he pressed her to his heart; and their lips met tremblingly.

He placed an engaged ring on her finger; told her that his parents warmly approved of his choice, and after a couple of hours left the house.

Early in the new year they were married; and no bride could have felt happier than Madge did on her wedding day.

Tiffen was a source of some annoyance to his new relatives, and they eventually pensioned him off on a pound a week, in return for which he roundly abused them at every opportunity, representing himself as the victim of their selfishness and treachery.



LOVE'S COMPARISONS.

YES, love, the world is passing fair:
 My world art thou;
 Gold sunbeams glitter—'tis thy hair—
 On snow—thy brow.
 Sweet cream and blush-red roses blow
 Upon thy cheek.
 The air vibrates to music low,
 For thou dost speak.
 Ah! love, two radiant flowers I view,
 Like summer skies:
 Forget-me-nots of brightest blue—
 They are thine eyes.
 See yonder salvia, in the row,
 Its blood-red tips
 Recall to me the carmine glow
 On thy curved lips.
 And knowest thou the flower we name
 Bethlehem's star?
 With pearly petals: as the same
 Thy white teeth are.
 And see that lily, fair and tall,
 Of stately mien;
 So thou art fairest flower of all,
 My lily queen!
 Each song-bird warbles to his mate
 A love refrain:
 "I love thee, sweet!" which I repeat
 To thee again.

S. HAZEL.

IN BAD HANDS.

A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

Author of "Grandmother's Money;" "Lazarus in London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER II.

POXY WHARTON HAS HIS HAIR CUT.

ALTHOUGH Folkestone Miles, organist of St. Eustace, had not seen the man at the opposite lamp-post, the man at the opposite lamp-post had taken stock of him, and swung his ungainly and ill-clad body round a little, as if anxious to escape the attention of one of whom he had inquired a short time since, the way to Charing Cross. When Mr. Miles had departed after satisfying his mind that all *was* right at Broadbrooks, the man slowly relapsed into his old position, and from under his shaggy eyebrows—which seemed made of wire, so thick and bristly were they—kept his watch again upon the hair-dresser's shop, and on the hair-dresser himself standing in the cool of the evening on the threshold of the domicile, with a self-satisfied smile upon his countenance.

Presently the watcher crossed the road, and with a solid, heavy slouch, moved towards Mr. Broadbrook, who not expecting a customer, or such a customer, gave a little jump of surprise as he stopped in front of him.

"Not too late to have my hair cut, governor, is it?" he said in a tone of forced familiarity that was particularly out of place in a gentleman so strikingly forbidding.

"N—no," said Mr. Broadbrook hesitatingly. "It's never too late for customers."

"Very well then."

"The charge is threepence—in advance," Mr. Broadbrook added, doubtfully regarding the new comer.

"Don't I look worth threepence?" asked the man, as he placed three pennies in the hand of the hairdresser forthwith.

"Oh yes, but it's the rule of the establishment."

Mr. Broadbrook backed into his shop, and over his sprawling children, set a chair for his visitor, and enwrapped him with much briskness and sleight of hand in a grey cotton sheet that had only been a week from the wash, and was less dingy than might have been expected.

"Run away, my chicks," said Mr. Broadbrook's to his progeny, "You see, papa is engaged," and at this suggestion, the three young Broadbrooks scrambled off the floor and departed like dutiful children to another sphere of action. Meanwhile the customer for hair cutting sat with a very much battered, billy cock hat on his head as though there was no necessity to remove it.

"Will you allow me——" said the hair-dresser at last, with a suave movement of the hands in the direction of the hat, and the man who was staring absently at the fireplace in the shop, and the hot shaving water ready on the hob for any one who might want an evening ha'porth, said nothing in dissent. Mr. Broadbrook removed the hat gently, turned up his one jet of gas, and produced a pair of scissors from his apron with an easy flourish. Then he paused and looked down on his customer's head of hair, with a certain amount of curiosity

and awe. He had seen a great many heads of hair in his time, and had operated upon them fearlessly—and masculine heads of hair in Marsh Walk, were of all degrees of tangleness and picturesque confusion, but this particular crop was uncommonly and luxuriantly wild, and matted together so strangely that even Mr. Broadbrook was perplexed how to make his first start, and in which direction.

"Fine weather for the country, sir," he remarked as he hovered in the rear with comb and scissors prepared for immediate action.

"Yes," hastily assented the gentleman in the chair, "fine weather."

"Been in the country lately, sir?" Mr. Broadbrook ventured to remark, as he became aware of the various grassy filaments mixed with his customer's hair, and which were strongly suggestive of the gentleman's having slept last night under a haystack.

"I came from the country yesterday. I have been there for the benefit of my health," he added with a sudden, mocking laugh which had no sense of fun in it.

"Oh! indeed. Harvest all in, I suppose?"

The man writhed in his grey wrapper as though Mr. Broadbrook's questions, were annoying him, and then growled forth—

"I don't know. And I don't care if it is'n't."

"No—ahem—I suppose not. How will you have your hair cut, sir. Long or ——"

"Anyhow," he answered without waiting for the operator to finish his sentence.

"Oh."

"You don't think it matters a great deal in what particular style I have it cut," he said in a friendly tone, as if suddenly aware that civility of demeanour would become him better, "do you, now?"

"Well—we always like to know."

"I was particular enough when I was a young fool, but I've got over all that nonsense now. So, Mr. Broadbrook, I leave it to your taste."

"Very good, sir."

Then the little barber attacked him in earnest, and struggled hard with comb and scissors, the customer groaning very often, and cursing now and then between his strong, white teeth, which would have been a redeeming feature in his personal appearance, had they been a little less in size than dominoes.

Presently when he was out of pain, and there was a considerable portion of his hair shorn or torn away, and lying on Mr. Broadbrook's sanded floor, he said:

"You must find this uphill work to make a fortune out of, Mr. Broadbrook?"

"Fortune is not the word, sir. A living it is—nothing more."

"And you get a living out of this. Really?"

"Really," repeated the hairdresser, not disposed to run down his own position in society before so rough a customer, "and a fair living too, as times go."

"Ah! you're lucky," remarked the man as if he doubted him; "I don't see how it pays myself. I could put you in a way of earning money a bit faster."

Mr. Broadbrook did not respond. He did not like the manners of the individual whose head he was, as he inelegantly termed it, "licking into

shape," and though they were exceptionally good manners for the gentleman under treatment—company manners, in fact—they had failed to make a favourable impression on the hairdresser.

After a moment's silence, and imagining Mr. Broadbrook had not heard him, he repeated slowly:

"I could put you in a way of earning money a bit faster than this. Don't you hear?" he added sharply; and after another moment's pause, "Where's your tongue got to all of a sudden? You were talkative enough a minute ago."

"I don't want to earn any money," said the hairdresser tetchily.

"Oh, don't you though?"

"And you will excuse me, but you look as if you did."

The man scowled at Mr. Broadbrook, as though he resented this flippant and uncalled-for observation, and the hairdresser felt an unpleasant creeping up his back, at the darkling glance bestowed upon him. Mr. Broadbrook was not a brave man, and, as a rule, not personal, but the impudence of some people, he considered, would make a worm turn, and hence, his natural affability had changed suddenly to pertness. He was a London shopkeeper in a big thoroughfare—one who paid his rent and taxes pretty regularly—and to be "talked to" by a common rough, emphatically a rough, was a little too much for his equanimity.

Nevertheless he wished he had not taken any notice of him, and his remarks after encountering that terrible sidelong glance from the man swaddled up in the grey wrapper. It told of a creature who was dangerous—of a wild beast to be on guard against, he was pretty sure of that.

The best thing to be done, was to get him out of the shop as speedily as possible, and to be as civil as possible to him also until he had gone. This was a fellow out of the common—or out of the jungle—and Mr. Broadbrook had not discovered that fact a moment too soon.

The man seemed to read what was passing in the hairdresser's mind—being with all his crudeness, his suppressed desperation, a man of an observant turn—for he made another effort to laugh pleasantly and turned Mr. Broadbrook all goose flesh in the futile effort.

"Money making never was in my line," he remarked. "I've had my chances, and lost them, like a good many more people. And I don't complain, do I?"

"No, indeed. Dear me. Certainly not," replied Mr. Broadbrook, willing to agree with his customer on every point now.

"What's the good of complaining after the chance has slipped out of one's hands? Do you see any good in that?"

"No, I don't."

"Then you're a philosopher. Come over the way and have a drink?"

"N—no thank you," stammered Mr. Broadbrook, "I—I never drink in business hours."

"That's a lie," was the flat contradiction here. "You came out of the 'Jolly Gardeners' three-quarters of an hour ago, wiping the back of your hand on that slobbery mouth of yours. I saw you."

"I—I went to see the time," explained Mr. Broadbrook, and yet wondering why he said this, as if by way of an apology. And he had popped across

the road with that object, and the landlord had in the most friendly spirit asked him if he would—"just a drain," and he had "drained" accordingly, at the liberal expense of a liberal but provident host who was fast draining himself into his grave, by undue consumption of the stock-in-trade.

"I don't want to force anybody to drink with me," said the man, making another effort to be conciliatory, after his impromptu burst of energy. "I've plenty of friends too glad to get drunk at my expense. Even you don't find friends of that kind scarce, I reckon?"

"Oh! dear no, certainly not," assented the barber, with a feeble chuckle. "There's lots of that sort about, and no mistake."

The man's hair was cut, but he still sat there, wrapped in Mr. Broadbrook's cotton toga, as though he had found the hairdresser to be pleasant company, and was very loth to part with him. He could not expect to sit there all night for three-pence, and talk in that queer, scoffing way like a man who had had his better days, and been a fool in them; and Mr. Broadbrook hoped in his heart another late customer would step into his premises, and oust the present party from them.

"There you are, sir, unless there is anything else I can do," said Mr. Broadbrook at last, and whisking the wrapper suddenly from the stalwart form before him.

The man looked at him from his half-shut, crafty eyes, and with a smile that was as bad as his laugh had been, said—

"Do you think I look nice and smart now?"

"It has certainly improved you."

"Fit for the society of ladies—eh?"

"Why not?" rejoined Mr. Broadbrook lightly, and yet not committing himself to a palpable untruth.

"Ah, why not?" was the echo back. "Then, Mr. Broadbrook, be good enough to inform your upstairs lodger—your 'first-floor front,' as you would call her—that her brother Foxy particularly wishes to see her."

"Bless my soul and body!"

"And that he's not going away without seeing her," added Mr. Wharton, as his big teeth closed together with a clashing sound, "and if he stops here till doomsday. You may as well mention that to her as well whilst you are about it, Broadbrook."

CHAPTER III.

WHAT HE CAME FOR.

MR. BROADBROOK remained speechless for a few moments, and regarded Mr. Wharton with eyes distended, and his lower jaw reposing on his chest.

"Mrs.—Wharton's—brother!" he gasped forth at last. "I—I didn't know she had a brother."

"She's a close one. Miss Wharton—or Mrs. Wharton, if she like's it better—always was a close one," replied Mr. Wharton. "Don't you see a likeness?"

"Can't say I do, although, now you come to speak of it—"

"Tell her, will you?" exclaimed Mr. Wharton, very roughly now. "Do you think I can wait here all night, talking to you?"

Mr. Broadbrook was scared by this fierce inquiry out of his own shop into his back-parlour, where was Mrs. Broadbrook, to whom he communicated the news in a stage whisper, and making many excited danger-signals with his arms.

"Go up and tell her, Charlotte, he's come."

"Who's come?" exclaimed his better half.

"Her brother—a regular blackguard—had his hair cut—wants to see her—ask her to tell you whether I shall show him up, or send for a dozen policemen to take him away? Look sharp."

Mrs. Broadbrook, looking sharp in consequence, hurried upstairs to the first floor, and her lord and master skipped into the shop again, where he found his customer examining a small regiment of razors ranged in a row against the wall, taking one down after another, and feeling the edge of each with a very black, thick thumb.

"Well, what does she say?" he asked, as the hairdresser reappeared.

"Mrs. Broadbrook has gone upstairs with your message."

"I asked *you* to go," he growled forth. "Women always muddle messages."

"Mrs. Broadbrook is a much better hand at messages than I am; and I never leave my shop till the shutters are up," he added, with a faint assumption of dignity.

"Except when you go over to the Jolly Gardeners," said the man, with a shrug of his broad shoulders. Then he put the last razor back, and began to walk round the shop slowly, reading all the bills upon the walls, the programmes of the Surrey and Victoria, the grand attractions at the South London and the Canterbury, the wonders to be seen nightly at Gatti's and the Winchester, the "friendly lead" at the Malsters' Arms in Gravel Lane, the annual summer excursion of the Lambeth Undertakers to Box Hill, the terms for a quarter's instruction at the dancing academies down various back streets in the vicinity, the forthcoming great cricket match at the Oval, and a "prompt" sale by auction of the goods and chattels of an unhappy neighbour, too far gone in arrears of rent to do anything but be sold off without reserve.

Mr. Wharton had read all these announcements before Mrs. Broadbrook came into the shop; his impatience had vanished again and "he seemed to take it awful easy," thought the hair-dresser. He was in no hurry now—quite the contrary.

"And how's the boy getting on, Broadbrook?" he asked, as he turned away from the last specimen of wall literature with which the shop was decorated, "how's Phil?"

"Oh! he's pretty well," replied the hair-dresser, "works hard, and gets on, I should say, famously. A nice little fellow."

"I am glad to hear you say that. Thankee, sir,—thankee."

"He ain't—is he—" began Mr. Broadbrook.

"My only son, sir. Yes. And what a sweet voice he has—and how it tells at St. Eustace's. Have you heard him sing?"

"I should think I had," exclaimed the hair-dresser, "not at St. Eustace's, for it's a goodish way off, and Mrs. Broadbrook takes the young ones to the chapel round the corner, in the afternoon, when it isn't too hot; but of course we have all heard him. We sit on the stairs, one behind the other sometimes, and listen to his singing, his

practising, you know. It's beautiful—one wonders where it comes from—he's a wonderful little chap, take him altogether."

"Yes. That's why I'm so proud of him," said Mr. Wharton.

"Oh! you art?" replied Mr. Broadbrook, "Oh! indeed."

"I don't miss a note of his voice every Sunday. I can pick him out of the whole lot of them, like a winkle. I can—Oh! here's somebody at last."

Mrs. Broadbrook emerged cautiously from the back parlour into the shop, and approached Mr. Wharton almost on tiptoe.

"She's very ill—"

"What do I care about that," cried the man flaming out again, "what's that to do with me—what's—"

"Gracious, man, let a body finish," exclaimed the barber's wife, starting off herself in a higher and shriller key, "but she'll see you, if you wish."

"All right. I do wish."

"Then go upstairs, and don't make too much noise or you'll wake my baby," said Mrs. Broadbrook, "it's the first floor front room."

"I know," answered Wharton, nodding his head as he strode past her into the parlour, and through a side door leading to the stairs, up which he clumped his way in heavy, thick-soled boots, covered with a week's mud, which had dried upon the leather in a white and nubbly pattern. On the first landing stood a pale-faced boy holding in his hand a small oil-lamp to light the footsteps of the visitor towards him—a boy with eyes too large for him now in very truth, dilated, as they were, with horror at his approach. The coming of a phantom from another world towards him, could not have scared young Phil Wharton more, than this coming of his father, who from another world too—a world of sin, and shame, and devilry, beyond one's power to describe—advanced towards him like an ogre.

"Phil," said the father, in a rough grating voice, as he caught sight of him on the landing, "so you're there then."

"Yes," was the soft, low answer back.

As the father approached, the son, light in hand, went slowly backwards through the open doorway keeping his great grey eyes fixed upon the visitor, and then, step by step, into the room and to the side of his sick aunt, sitting in a pillowed chair by the fireplace, with two thin hands crossed upon her lap, and her white, scared face, turned steadily towards her brother as he entered with that scowl of hate she knew so well, and had fled from, years ago. And yet with him before her, it seemed only like a day or two since she had stolen away, taking his child with her, saving his child from him.

Phil put the little lamp on the mantelpiece, and then stood by his aunt's side watchful, and calm, and pale, and Foxy Wharton looked from one to the other as he closed the door carefully behind him, and turned the key in the lock, as though doubtful, or afraid of those who might follow in his wake.

Mrs. Wharton was the first to speak.

"I did not think I should see you any more in life, Mark," she said calmly. "I had a hope that you were dead."

"A pretty hope that was," answered the man, "so nice and kind too! I'd have been ashamed to own as much as that to anyone. Well, I

haven't come to see you—I could have lived on, or died off, without fretting myself about you, Bella, very comfortably."

"What have you come for then?"

"For him!"

And Mr. Mark Wharton, better known amongst a choice circle of friends and acquaintances as Foxy Wharton, stepped across the worn out hearthrug, and laid his big broad hand upon the shoulder of his son.

(To be continued.)

FIRST LOVE.

THEY met one evening long ago,
As shadows lengthened on the hills,
And lingering sunbeams kissed good-night
To sleepy daffodils.

When heart meets heart, and hand clasps hand,
The rosy hours how fast they glide!
For what recks Love, of flight of time,
With Psyche by his side?

They parted for a length of years,
With vows of love for evermore,
But when they met, 'twas not again,
As they had met before.

In youth, how real the dream of love,
And oh! how beautiful it seems!
The pity is it fades so soon,
As is the way with dreams!

FAUVETTE.

MEDICAL REMINISCENCES.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

ANIMAL MAGNETISM.—MAD MURITTY.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.—*Hamlet*.

THE above oft-quoted aphorism is by no means a saying devoid of sense. The greatest William that the world has ever seen was not in the habit of opening his mouth and letting it say whatever it pleased. To lips and tongue he never granted *carte blanche*, for a mighty brain guided his pen and governed his organs of speech. Probably it was because Shakespeare knew so much that he sometimes seemed to be sensible of his own comparative littleness. The soul-blind man may stand on the shores of the illimitable ocean of knowledge, and feel himself to be a god; but, as the mists of ignorance begin to be dispelled and dark clouds lift and clear away, all thoughts of self are lost for ever: he can but wonder and admire; and this same wonderment and admiration constitute, to my thinking, one of the truest forms of divine worship—it cometh from the heart.

All human knowledge, all science, points ever towards the unseen and the eternal, as the needle points to the Pole. And, however waveringly,

however unsteadily the indication may be made, it should not be treated with contempt.

Mesmerism may be called one of the occult sciences, if, indeed, the term be not paradoxical. It is one that has been made much of by the grossly ignorant charlatan and quack, but is seldom, if ever, made a subject of study by professional medical men themselves.

I have to confess that I myself have never devoted my time, to any very lasting attempt to unravel the secrets of the science. The little knowledge I possess of it has been, in a manner, forced upon me, through frequently coming in contact with people who either had the power—a power with which few are endowed—to mesmerize others, or to glide themselves, easily and almost voluntarily, into the mesmeric trance. This latter is quite different from ordinary sleep, during which not only are the nerves of organic life for the time being in a state akin to paralysis, but even the brain that in the waking moments governs them. It is different, too, from the condition of somnambulism, which is only a form of imperfect or partial sleep, during which the voluntary muscles are governed by a brain acting under the influence of a vivid dream. In mesmerism the motions and actions of the body are, to a great extent, if not entirely, dominated by the will of another—whatever that word "will" may mean. How far mesmerism might be made a means of healing disease, or of suspending inordinate or diseased action of any kind, it is not my intention on the present occasion to inquire. We know, however, that mesmeric influence or power is communicated from one human body to another, by means of touch or by passes. If we consider the brain to be but a species of Leyden jar, filled more or less completely with animal electricity, and the nerves of voluntary motion to be, as it were, the wires that conduct therefrom, and if we grant, merely for the sake of argument, that the word "will" is but another name for this animal electricity, it is not then difficult to believe that it may easily pass from a more commanding brain, along the arm and through the finger-tips into the body of another, and so dominate his will. But touch is not always necessary in order to effect mesmerism; the influence finds a conductor even in the air that intervenes between the operator and his patient, and there are doubtless many other mediums. Nor is it along the arm and fingers only that the electricity can be made to pass, but notably from eyes to eyes, and a powerful mesmerist may be able to operate with the eye alone without either touch or pass: though only at short distances.

Well, the brain of a mesmerist is naturally more full of vital energy and force than is that of the subject he dominates; and whatever weakens or depresses body and nerves, either momentarily or for a lengthened period, destroys for the time being the power to mesmerize. Self-consciousness has a most depressing effect on what we call the mind. Instance: a thoughtful child being suddenly brought to book by his teacher for some little fault that he had thought forgotten or concealed, how the calm glance of the pedagogue subjugates the mind of that erring boy! In the same way the prisoner at the bar, who quails beneath the quiet, stern eye of a judge, is just then under the influence of a force mesmeric. But there are

prisoners who, though guilty, do not quail; whose brains—albeit their minds may be most immoral—are as full, if not more full, of vital energy than is the judge's. And, on the other hand, there are many men of what is called the nervous (it ought to be nerveless) temperament, so painfully, easily influenced by mesmerism, that the sudden imputation of a crime to them would induce embarrassment in their minds, though perfectly innocent. Not many days ago a gentleman informed me that he would rather do anything or pay anything, than go as a witness to a court of justice.

"Whenever I have had to do so," he added, "I am sure I looked far more guilty than the accused."

Some of our very best readers and lecturers—Dickens, I believe, among the number—have endured sufferings untold before appearing on the stage, and subjecting themselves to the mesmeric battery of probably a thousand pairs of upturned eyes.

Those who have been in love have often felt the force mesmeric in glances, when eye looked into eye, or in thrills of indefinable pleasure when fingers met or accidentally touched. These are cases where the Leyden jar, the brain, is so surcharged with vital electricity that mere momentary contact with one *en rapport* is sufficient to cause its overflow.

Mesmeric force or vital energy, call it what you please, may, and often does, pass from a stronger brain to a weaker, thereby strengthening and imparting additional courage to the receiver. Remark, for instance, the confidence and valour with which a timid child is inspired, while walking, say on a lonely road by night with a parent, if permitted to hold his hand.

We all know that if we place two bodies together—such as two pieces of iron, for instance—of unequal temperatures, there takes place an immediate interfusion of caloric, which lasts until the amount of heat is the same in both.

Would it not appear that a transfusion—akin to this—of vital energy may and often does take place from a strong-minded individual to a companion who is, temporarily perhaps, deficient in nervous force? Example: a person who is constantly abroad mingling with the world has an opportunity of keeping up his vital energy, keeping it on a par with that of his neighbours, by a process of what we might call mental *endosmosis* and *exosmosis*, but how different it is with him or with her who is obliged to stay at home, who never "sees anything or anybody;" for in this case life force gets wasted, and is not renewed until communication is effected with the company obtained, of some one from the outer world!

Loneliness is *such* a depressant!

"Oh! for someone to speak to, to listen to, to look at!" we fancy we hear a prisoner in solitary confinement often-times exclaim.

Yes, loneliness is a terrible depressant! Not only does loneliness engender nervousness which may end in incurable melancholy, but loneliness—I say it without fear of contradiction—has led many a poor soul to mania and to suicide.

The women belonging to the upper middle-class society are more apt to become the victims of this life-depressant than any others. At this very moment I know of more than one poor lady, whose happiness in life has been sacrificed to the sinful

thoughtlessness of brother or of husband. Indeed I greatly fear that the very best of us men-folks, who can be about and abroad all day, think but far too seldom of the weary, lonesome ones we leave at home. Do I speak the truth, ladies, or do I not?

Selah! I am digressing, I am drifting from the subject in hand. Psychology in its relation to disease, and to the science of medicine is a very pleasant study, and the field is very wide, but I have no intention at present to enter on it.

Let me come back to mesmerism, or as it is more often called, whether rightly or wrongly, animal magnetism. When a lad at school, I remember well, there came to lecture on this subject, in a hall in a neighbouring village, a lady mesmerist. She may still be alive, and even lecturing, or she may have "crossed the burn," as the Scotchman said, that travellers never re-cross, and learnt a secret even greater than that of mesmerism. This lady, I mind, used to choose from half a dozen to a dozen persons of any age or sex from the audience. She seated them all in a row on the stage, and gave each a copper coin to gaze steadily at, while for a time she went on with her interesting lecture. A pretty row of fools they looked too, sitting there nodding and "nid—nid—nodding," as the song says, over their pennies. But the fun was all to come. Presently the lady took away their chairs, stood her subjects up in a semi-circle, and proceeded to make passes over their faces, until they were all in the trance mesmeric. Then for fully half an hour the audience were kept laughing at the tricks those sleeping simpletons were obliged to perform, at the will of the lady operator. They who had no more music in their souls than a mule has, were made to sing now, or make an attempt at all events; a stiff old rheumatic man danced the Highland fling, a little modest weaver body, who would not have touched a gun in his waking moments for love or money, was started shooting partridges with a poaching-stick. And so on and so forth, it was vastly amusing the whole performance, and we all went away mightily well pleased, and all the fun at school for a month to come consisted in fruitless efforts to mesmerize each other. My own pet patient was an immensely large Landseer Newfoundland dog, and I fully believed I could put him asleep, though I could never make him dance.

I do not at this moment place much faith in the so-called power of the human eye over the lower animals. A friend of mine, little Major D—, from India, used to boast that he had once fixed a tiger by gazing at him steadfastly. The animal, he said, could neither advance nor retire, and was finally shot by this officer's servant.

"There is a bull," I said, "lives in a field not far from here; I should like to see you 'fix' that."

"I'll have a try anyhow," said the Major.

So next day the Major started off to fix the bull, and half a dozen of us—we were a shooting party—went with him to witness the fun and the fixing of Jock the bull, one of those splendid Highland specimens that Rosa Bonheur delights to paint, with flaming red eyes, horns yards in length, and a head like a furze bush—Jock, I say, inhabited a large field with some ten or fifteen cows. The field was surrounded by a stone fence, and had a five-barred gate, the bars of which could be let

down at one end simply. Jock soon came from the top of the park when he spied his distinguished visitors; he kept his nose near the ground and kept up a wow—wow—wowing sound as he ran.

"Over you go and fix him, D——," we cried.

"All right," replied D—— somewhat languidly; "I'll fix him."

Well, I never saw a man go over a gate so stiffly before in my life, but I am bound to add he made up for it coming back.

Jock was no lover of science evidently; he gave the Major no time for fixing. I had my hand on the fastening of the upper bar and just dropped it in time. The Major sprang over like a bird. He wore a red sash affair around his waist, and, as he jumped, Jock got one horn under that and ripped it off, and when he retired it was flaunting defiantly from his head.

This is the only time I have ever seen the power of the human eye put to a practical test, but of course I have read "Barnaby Rudge" and know how Simmonds used his.

One of the beliefs common among the country people in the "land of my sires" regarding mesmeric influence is that the operator retains a certain power over his subjects for some indefinite time after he has mesmerised them.

"I am staying," said a mesmerist on the stage to a fellow in the trance, "at the Queen's Inn. You will come to me to-morrow morning at ten o'clock precisely. I command you."

Every one in the village was on the outlook next day at the time appointed, to see if the man would appear—he lived at a farm quite a mile distant. And when he was at length seen coming rushing up the street, streaming with perspiration and making straight for the Queen's, the villagers positively looked frightened. For nights after this the mesmerist's hall was crowded. It was a fine draw; but the bucolic lout spoiled the cream of the joke a week or two afterwards by confessing "over a dram" that he had been paid for his part of the performance.

Still, as I have said, the belief in this obedience-compelling power of the mesmerist over a person he has once mesmerised holds good in many places. Another belief is that only the mesmerist himself can awake the subject from the trance.

In connection with the semi-superstitious belief, let me relate briefly an adventure I had in my medical student's days.

It was during a summer session devoted principally to the study of *materia medica*, chemistry, and botany. Our professor of botany used to take the class out about three times a week early in the morning across the fields, and through the woods, to collect and study specimens. I did not like these trips; pretentious students who wanted good marks used to hang toadily around the professor, and the more modest and probably better men had to bring up the rear. I preferred studying botany book in hand all by myself in the country—alone with Nature, for I really loved the science.

We did not require to show more than a certain number of *adsums* during the session, so I was in the habit of putting in an appearance regularly every day for about a fortnight, then going off to the country on a Friday evening and staying till Wednesday. If the truth must be told there was a young lady in the case. No matter where she

lived, it was at her father's farm some five and thirty or forty miles from the university town. Forty miles was not a long walk for me and my collie dog in those days. Said I to myself one beautiful Friday afternoon in June: "You've been hard at work, my boy, for two whole weeks: suppose you put a bit of bread and cheese in your botanical case, take your stick in your hand, and go and see poor Maggie?"

The botanical case was accordingly slung over my shoulder. It easily contained all I should need; so, just after tea, Tyro and I started and struck out for the north-north west.

We would travel all night, taking an hour or two of rest at the little inn of C——. Once clear of the town's din and dust, walking was most pleasant and exhilarating. Tyro evinced an inclination to scour the fields in search of rabbits, but when I explained to him that he had a very long road before him, and that he would be tired enough before morning, he kept to heel, and tried to look like a sedate old dog, which he wasn't.

We supped and rested at C—— and were on the march again by a little past twelve. It was a glorious night, the big round moon silvered the mountains, and cast a glamour as of enchantment over the lovely woods, and over the mists that lay low down in the "haugh" lands. We had still over fifteen miles to walk, but I felt as fresh as a mountain trout, and so, I think, did Tyro.

About two o'clock we stood together on the top of a round heather hill or what in most parts of England would be called a mountain. Before and beneath us was a forest of tall pine trees, beyond that a wide stretch of moorland, around this wood and moor the road swept. "If," I said to Tyro, "we can find our way straight through forest and moor, we will meet the road again and save ourselves fully three miles walking. Let us try." Tyro wagged his flag of a tail, and off we set. There was no undergrowth among the trees, which were mostly beeches and firs, that towered straight upward to an immense height, then formed a canopy overhead through which, bright and piercing though the moon's rays were, they could hardly struggle.

I had taken my bearings well, and, dark though it was in the wood—dark and very silent—by keeping the moon somewhat on our left, it was not difficult to march in almost a bee line. In about twenty minutes' time we came to some elevated ground and I got up to look around.

I was glad to find that we were well nigh clear of the wood, and close to the moor, so we sat down to rest. In ancient times the spot where I now found myself must have been some Druidical place of worship; although there were no tall stones, there were the remains of a circular wall enclosing a space some fifty feet in diameter. With the exception of an old gray boulder the wall itself was entirely covered over with trees and moss, and heather and brackens grew in the centre, tall and rank and green. Glad to have a rest I seated myself on the stone, and commenced to read Maggie's last letter, or rather to re-read it. Although in another hour it would be daylight, there were now no signs even of dawn, and the moon shone as brightly as it had done at midnight.

Some time afterwards I was startled from a kind of half-dream, half reverie, into which I had

fallen, by the conduct of my dog. He was sitting close to my side, with his head in the air, growling low but ominously, and trembling all over as I had never known him tremble before. His hair, too, was elevated in a remarkable manner, from stern to stern, as one might say. I looked about and could see nothing. I grasped my stick and listened, patting the dog to keep him quiet as I did so.

List! I could not be mistaken: there were voices, or a voice, muttering over there among the brackens, in the centre of what I now began to consider a kind of magic circle. An incessant, busy, delirious kind of muttering!

To say that I did not feel fear would be to credit myself with more courage than I really possess. I felt afraid then, if ever I did in my life. My heart beat very quick, and the sweat burst out on my brow. Then the dog emitted a kind of half-hysterical bark, like the sound one makes in a nightmare when trying to scream.

At the sound there suddenly appeared among the ferns a tall figure, dressed in white, with a girdle round its waist, and a kind of turban of dark material about the head. It seemed to spring up out of the very ground, and stood silently confronting me for the space of many long seconds. I could see now that this fearsome *it* was a woman, an old woman, wrinkled in face, but straight in figure, and with long locks of grizzled hair escaping from beneath the turban, and hanging down over her ears. At the first sight of this strange and mysterious apparition my dog howled and fled, and I saw him no more for some time. I could not run, I felt rooted to the ground. I opened my mouth and tried to speak, but no words would come. I could only stare at the figure that confronted me.

At what followed I can afford to laugh now, but I beg to assure the reader, I thought it no laughing matter then.

The apparition took two strides towards me, craning forward her neck and awful face, and holding her arms stretched straight out behind her. As she did so she uttered a prolonged "Ah! ah! ah!" partly croak, partly shriek. I believe my hair *did* move then, for the moon streamed full in her upturned face, and her eyes had that steady stony stare in them that we notice in those of the *crotalus horridus*, or rattlesnake. Had she not spoken I believe I should have swooned. She did speak however, and with a vengeance too, and moved as well.

"You'll be he! you'll be he! you'll be he!" she shouted. "Come at last! come at last! come at last!"

Screaming these same words over and over again, she retreated; but her further motions did not conduce to calm my nerves or restore my mental equilibrium. She commenced a wild dance around that demon circle, and I leave the reader to imagine how she looked. As she came towards me, I broke and fled, and did not stop running till out of the wood and half-way across the moor. Glancing around, making sure that I was not followed, I then continued my journey at a brisk walking pace, and arrived at the end of my journey in good time in the morning.

Tyro had been there long before me. He came down the "loaning" to meet me, looking thoroughly apologetic and penitent. And Maggie was not far

behind him, looking as fresh and bonnie as the sweet June morning itself.

I soon forgot my adventure; but that same day after dinner, when Maggie asked me how it was that the dog had arrived at the farm fully an hour before me, I told my story, expecting to be laughed at, for even then I was not quite convinced in my own mind that the whole adventure was not part and parcel of a dream which I might have had while half asleep on the stone.

But Maggie looked serious, though her father smiled.

"You've seen old Muritty," he said, "Mad Muritty."

"And who on earth is Mad Muritty?" I inquired.

"They say she is a witch," replied Maggie's father, "but there is nothing of the witch about her in my opinion. She is mad, that is all; as mad as a March hare or a batter."

"Some thirty odd years ago," he continued, "Muritty, they tell me, was as pretty a girl as any one could wish to see. But there came to this glen to lecture in the parish school-room a mesmerising kind of a fellow. He did not get much of an attendance, but for all that he stopped on and on, people said it was because he was in love with bonnie Mary Hewetson, that was her name then. No, I don't know why they called her Muritty. Well, he mesmerised Mary one night, and commanded her to meet him the same evening up in the wood, at that uncanny cairn, where the wits were nearly scared out of you last night. Mary went. The mesmerist never came. He was drowned in crossing the ford. He was carried back and 'streakit' in the very school-room where he used to lecture."

"Well?" I said:

"Well," said the farmer, "that is all. Mary went mad, you see; the mesmeric sleep was still on her, and he was not alive to remove it. She lives alone now in a wee bit house on the moor. But on bright moonlight nights she often goes yonder, and there are few in the parish that would care to venture into that pine wood when mad Muritty is out on her rounds."

LOVE IS MORE THAN LIFE.

BY MABEL COLLINS.

Author of "In the Flower of Her Youth," "Viola Fanshawe," &c. &c.

CHAPTER L.

FOUND AT LAST.

GEORGE MARLOW walked away in the darkness of that night when he had taken Lord Vanesourt's life, without knowing where he was going, or for what purpose. His mind was absorbed in the thought of what he had done. But the instinct of escape was at work within him; in some mysterious way, his feet led him in the best possible direction. Possibly too, his mind worked unconsciously. On through the quiet streets he went, until he found himself outside the great King's Cross station. He entered quietly, and

found a train was soon starting north. He took a ticket for York, and getting into a third class carriage, retreated into the farther corner and sat down to try and collect his thoughts; he had no plan. He did not know how best to act. It seemed to him that he had now been checkmated. He found himself vainly wondering where Agatha could be. He never for a moment believed Lord Vanecourt's insinuations. He felt positive that Agatha was not mad. No one who had ever known her, could fancy any grief or trouble unseating her reason.

He was confident that wherever she might be, she was sane. How then was she kept out of her rights? He came to the conclusion that she must be held a prisoner; and he determined to try and find her, however impossible and difficult the task might appear.

The train steamed out of the station. The other people who came into the compartment settled down to sleep. George resolved that he would form some plan before reaching York. So far, he was safe. No one knew of Lord Vanecourt's death but himself; it might not be discovered immediately. And he believed, as was the fact, that he had entered and left the house unobserved. He felt sure he had a good chance of escape. But how should he use it? That was the problem. He could not leave England again with these diamonds upon him, when he had risked so much in order to restore them. Nor could he resign himself to the idea of leaving England again without making an effort to save Agatha from whatever dark fate it was that hung over her.

But it made him very uneasy to be again in England with these diamonds upon him. He thought what Lord Vanecourt had said was probably true; he would be recognised by the police in spite of his disguise. With the diamonds upon him, if once any suspicions were roused, he would be lost.

He suddenly formed a bold resolution; these jewels were, after all, but poorly protected on his body. If Lord Vanecourt had been a stronger man he would have killed George Marlowe, and the diamonds would have been lost altogether to Agatha. He would protect them with his life; but then his life was not charmed. He felt oppressed by the responsibility now that it had led him into such a terrible position. Therefore he determined to take a new step.

He would go back to the old place, and under cover of night enter the grounds of Dene House, and there deeply and safely bury the jewels on Agatha's own land. They would be far safer there, he thought, than upon himself. He would bury them in an inaccessible spot in the Dene; who would think to look there for the Vanecourt diamonds? And then relieved of this responsibility, he would go resolutely in search of Agatha. If taken by the police, he would demand to see her, or at all events to communicate with her.

This plan formed, his mind was more at rest. He leaned back in his corner, and dozed a little, his hand upon his belt. But suddenly he started up with a sort of inarticulate cry; the first vision of his sleep had been Lord Vanecourt's body lying dead before him. The other people in the carriage stirred, and looked at him in surprise. Then George saw that he held his own life in his hands; that he dared not rest or sleep, unless he was quite alone, lest he should reveal his secret.

He kept himself awake by trying to elaborate some details of his plan. He determined to walk from York to Hartlepool. In a seaport where there are always sailors about, he would not be noticed. From there he would walk to Ilverton, timing it so that he would get to the village after dark. This would take him a day or two altogether; but he thought it best to take time and run no risk of being noticed or watched. At Ilverton he proposed to get into his workshop after dark and fetch what tools he would want. He felt sure it was standing empty as he left it. Mrs. Dering had bought a few of the cottages in the village; this was one of them. Neither he nor his mother had ever paid rent for it; both having been constantly employed by Mrs. Dering. She regarded it as a matter of course that they should live in one of her cottages. He did not suppose that Lord Vanecourt would give any attention to such a matter, and there was no one else to do so.

The key of the cottage was in his pocket. He began to think of his old quiet life there, and a longing to return to it came upon him. But that he knew was impossible. He felt that such a life as that could never be his again. It would be years before he could be alone, and quiet, without the vision of that room in Lord Vanecourt's house rising before him. He recalled it always as in that moment's stillness when the struggle was over; when the awful silence of the house made itself felt. He saw it always, brightly lit, with all the signs of busy life, of wealth, of occupation about it; and that dead man lying on the ground. And he himself was the fate that had stepped in and stopped that busy life of selfishness and wrong!

It would not bear thinking of. He did not know yet how to face it. He was glad when he left the train at York; glad to go out into the air and walk. It was easier to him to travel like this in his present humour; he walked off some of the excitement and restlessness that was on him.

He did not hurry on his journey, for, as yet, he could not determine what to do when he had reached the end of it. He could not guess how to set about a search for Agatha. On the way, at the roadside inn where he staid, he would sit for hours in the sanded bar-parlour, amid villagers, drinking and talking: yet he neither drank nor talked. He dared not drink any thing while those diamonds were on him, lest he should fall asleep after his long walks; he did not talk, because his mind was absorbed in contemplating the problem before him.

At Hartlepool, he hung about for a day or two, feeling safe that, among so many seafaring men as are always in a seaport, he would not be observed; and he was still so undecided how to act when he had once rid himself of the diamonds, that he was in no hurry to get it done. Besides, it was no light responsibility to bury these jewels in the ground and leave them to their fate. He was very anxious not to be noticed on his way, for he fancied that he would be followed and watched. He was still unable to divest himself of the idea that every one knew he carried the diamonds upon him. This was natural enough, for he could think of nothing else, and his absorbed manner did sometimes attract attention.

At last, one afternoon, he made up his mind to start for Ilverton. The men who had been lodging in the same house as himself, left that day in a

merchant vessel for Germany ; and he determined to go and accomplish his purpose, before he made any more chance acquaintances who might wonder at his silent manner, and be tempted to watch him.

He started so that he would get into the neighbourhood of Ilverton when it was growing dark. He did not trust over much to his altered appearance when he should come among people who had known him nearly all his life; and, moreover, sailors seldom or never go inland to these quiet, old-world villages. He would be noticed, certainly; and if met coming or going from the Dene, his errand would certainly be an object of great wonder. So, notwithstanding that the dusk had begun to gather when he neared the village, he did not enter it, but went round through the fields to the head of the Dene. He did not think it wise to enter his workshop, even at the back, until it was quite dark. But he thought he would go first and determine on the best spot to bury the jewels, and then carefully note how to reach the place, when he should come from the village in the dark. With this purpose he climbed the rising ground, and reached the back of the great rock which formed the head of the Dene. He had to go a long way round it, in order to get to its face, and then he stepped upon the little platform where that scene had taken place between Lord Vaneourt and Mrs. Dering, which had ended in her death. He paused a moment here, and looked at the precipice below him. He knew that it was from here that Mrs. Dering had fallen. He shuddered as he thought of it. The man must have been soulless, heartless, a mere animal, who could let her go to such a death. He had revenged her according to the old law, of a life for a life. He had taken the life of that man. Was it any comfort, he asked himself, that this man was cruel, infamous, evil; that he had committed this inexcusable and shameless crime? No; it was but little comfort. The dusk was gathering rapidly; the steps that led down the face of the rock were becoming momentarily less visible. George roused himself, and would not stay to think, lest his nerve should desert him. He began to clamber swiftly down the precipice.

He reached the bottom, where it seemed quite dark, until his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom. He stood still a moment; he remembered it was just here that Mrs. Dering's body had lain. He remembered how he had come with the others from the village and found Agatha beside the body; how strange her face looked! how stern and set and terrible it looked—not like the face of a girl facing her first grief. He had never doubted from that moment, that Mrs. Dering had been murdered; he had never doubted who the murderer was. But from then till now, the past was a mystery to him. He could not even attempt to understand it. Where was Agatha herself? Why had she let her great fortune be squandered by a murderer and an impostor? It was unlike her, not to take up her great responsibilities. Thinking thus, he advanced softly, looking about him; his object was to decide where best to hide the jewels, and he went on with his purpose mechanically, though his thoughts were with Agatha.

When he had advanced a few steps he became aware of a figure, standing motionless. It was rather startling to meet any one so unexpectedly

in this unfrequented place. George's first thought was how best to escape notice himself. He decided to go straight on down the narrow path, past the figure, with an air as if he were merely exploring this picturesque spot for the sake of its beauty. So he began whistling softly and went quickly on. He became aware as he approached the figure that it was a woman who stood in his path. A second later, he knew that it was Agatha.

CHAPTER LI.

TOLD IN THE RAVINE.

AGATHA certainly did not recognize him in the least. She was absorbed in thought and in memories of the past. It was an unexpected sight, that of a sailor wandering at dusk in the Dene; for as a rule sailors do not care for country walks, and prefer to congregate in bar parlours. But Agatha did not easily startled, and George Marlowe did not look aggressive, spite of his changed appearance.

Agatha drew back to let him pass; he came close to her and stopped. Then she looked in surprise at the man. Something in the earnest gaze fixed on her awoke a dim recognition. She drew her brows together in a frown of perplexity.

"What do you want?" she said.

"You don't know me, Miss Agatha!"

"No," she said, looking at him in profound amazement.

"There's no great change, miss, except my dress and my beard, and that my skin's a good deal darker," he said, in a tone almost of dejection. Much as he had counted on his altered appearance, he was a little disappointed that Agatha did not know him. Something in his voice now suddenly told her who he was.

"Why!" she exclaimed, "it is George Marlowe." She held out her hand to him. George flushed a little with pleasure, but kept his eyes down, and pretended not to see that outstretched hand.

"I've got a great deal to tell you, miss," he said. "But first let me rid myself of the greatest burden I ever carried. I came here to get rid of it; but never did I think of such luck as finding you here!"

"What can you mean!" exclaimed Agatha in great wonder.

George put his hand inside his loose blue shirt, and after a moment drew out a broad leather band, which had been fastened round his waist.

"I've always put it on in such a way that I could unfasten it in a moment, for it has brought me into such straits that I've had to plan so as to be ready for any emergency. But I never hoped just to meet you like this, Miss Agatha, and just quietly take it off and give it you! Here it is; please take it, miss, and then I shall draw a free breath for the first time for a year."

He held it out to her. Agatha took it in her hand.

"What is it?" she said.

"In that belt, miss, there's the Vaneourt diamonds, and all the other jewels that Mrs. Dering had in charge for you."

"Why!" said Agatha, "I heard the Vaneourt diamonds were stolen! Mr. Whitehead told me so."

"Yes, miss, everybody thought I stole them, and the police did all they could to catch me; everybody thought I stole them, except him who put the police upon me; and he knew I did it to prevent them going the way of the rest of your fortune."

Agatha looked up at him quickly; she was beginning to understand.

"I believed I was doing my duty, miss, to my old mistress and to you."

George drew himself up, and looked very handsome as he said this. In the man of principle there is always an element of grandeur; if he is but a carpenter or rough sailor he is elevated above his fellows.

Agatha looked with admiration and respect, and even something of awe, at this man who had been through so much in order to be true to what he held to be his duty. For her quick imagination told her that he had suffered; there was no need for him to describe the past year in detail. Her swift sympathies enabled her to read it in his face. Mr. Whitehead had given her a brief, but graphic account of the theft of the diamonds; she guessed very easily that George had been the apparent villain—in reality, the hero—of this affair.

"They are all there, Miss—every stone," he said, as she looked at the heavy belt that she held in her hands.

"How can I ever thank you!" she said. "Oh, George, you have been a hero! Come with me into the village. Mr. Whitehead and I are staying to-night at one of the cottages. I want to hear all your story—all the adventures you have been through with these jewels. Do you know you have saved me a fortune? Come with me, and tell all the story, and let us both hear it. How have you been? I wish dear Grannie could thank you."

George hung down his head, and drew back a step.

"No, Miss," he said; "I can't ever go into that village again. I can't come with you."

"Why not?" said Agatha. "Is it because you have been suspected? Mr. Whitehead will soon set all that right. And he shall communicate with the police. Do come, George. It is quite dark now; we cannot stay here much longer, and I want to talk to you."

"I have one thing to tell you, miss," said George, "and when that's told I'll go. I'm off to sea again, now I'm rid of those jewels."

"Nonsense!" said Agatha, imperatively. But, though it was gloomy and dark here in the ravine, the sky above was lit by the pale light of the rising moon. She could see George's face in the dim gleam from above, and she was silenced by the look upon it.

"What is it?" she said; "what have you to tell me?"

He drew from his belt Lord Vanecourt's dagger. "Do you know this, Miss Agatha?"

She looked curiously at it.

"No," she answered; "I have never seen it, that I remember."

"It was Lord Vanecourt's," he said. Suddenly he raised his arm, and flung the dagger far away into the brushwood.

Agatha's eyes were fixed on him in wonder; she started at this passionate gesture, but she said nothing.

After a moment's pause, he went on:

"I saw in the papers, while I have been in Hartlepool, that the inquest has been held, and that they supposed his lordship had committed suicide. Miss, I spoke without thinking, when I said as soon as I'd told you I should be off to sea. Instead of that, I'll follow you into the village; and you shall do whatever you choose with me. You will have to send for the police. Lord Vanecourt did not commit suicide: I killed him."

"George, George!" exclaimed Agatha, in a low voice.

Her face turned very pale; she retreated from him a step. Her father had been her one enemy; she had found in her heart no grief for him when he was dead; but yet a shiver of horror passed through her, at this unexpected confession.

George plunged at once into the story of that night when he had visited Vanecourt House, and found Lord Vanecourt alone there. He prefaced it by a few words, which gave Agatha a more definite idea of how he had obtained the jewels first, of his sense of responsibility about them, and of how he had escaped from the detectives at Vanecourt House. He told her how he had found Mrs. Dering's chatelaine in the Dene, and had been impressed with the idea, that it was his duty to take charge of the contents of the safe; and of the singular feeling which had come upon him, when encountering such strange adventures in protecting the diamonds, that she approved his conduct, and trusted him. Then, in a low, quick voice, he went on to tell her of that night when he met with the greatest danger of all, in encountering Lord Vanecourt face to face, and alone. He recounted all that occurred, even repeating the words of their conversation.

Agatha stood still as a statue, listening, her lips parted, her eyes wide with horror, as the scene thus graphically described passed vividly before her; her face looking white in the gleam of the moon. Once she looked round her with a shudder. On the very spot where Mrs. Dering met her death, Agatha heard the tale of how the murderer died! But there was a more terrible fascination in George's face than in the dark recesses of the ravine; Agatha's eyes fastened again upon it. At last the story was told; and then, when his voice ceased, there was silence for a few moments. Then Agatha spoke. She answered the thoughts she read in his face.

"You acted in self-defence," she said. "What else could you do? Had you not killed him, you would have lost your own life. It is but as the soldier kills in battle. Come with me, and let us talk about it with Mr. Whitehead. He is older and wiser than I; he will know what to say."

"I will come with you," said George, "if you wish to put me in the hands of the police."

"What, when you were defending my property! The thing is horrible to think of, but the most horrible part of it is, that he should have acted as he did. Come with me, I beg of you. I don't know how to speak about this."

"No, miss; unless you wish me to be tried, I will go away. I will always let you know where I am, in case you should alter your mind any time. But I want to get away, to forget the nightmare in which I have been living. God bless you, miss, and good-bye."

As he said the last words, he sprang down the steep path.

Agatha followed him quickly, as soon as she realized his purpose, but he was already gone. It was impossible to follow him in the darkness. Agatha called out loudly to him, but no answer came; and then she refrained, thinking she might endanger his safety by calling his name even in this wild solitude.

And so; absorbed in thought, her mind full of strange memories and pictures, she went down the familiar pathway, and entered the little village street.

(To be continued.)

THE BELLE OF BLOO VALLEY.

BY CHARLES KRUGER.

THE little vale of Bloo was dull with silence. Scarcely a sound was heard, save the jarring voice of the rooks as they flew to their abode. Close at hand was the town of Cardley, and here at the outskirts and built on a befitting eminence was Cardley Castle, with its massive outer walls. Round two-thirds of the wall's extent was a comfortable path, wide and seated, which was free and open for the use of all who would use it properly.

Spread out beneath this was Bloo Valley, green and kine covered. The trees thereon were black and leafless; the river Bloo went its placid course and made a silver streak through the vale; and the blue line of hills in the far distance seemed to meet the lighter blue of the sky.

The canopy right above was grey in colour; it was a mild morning, but no sun was seen.

A young man walked on the castle path, and lashed the brown dead leaves with his cane. Very often he paused and looked searchingly over the valley, then resumed his dreamy stroll. His appearance was not robust, but he was fair to look upon; and when he gazed across the land, there was beauty in the light that sprung from his eyes.

"I wonder if she can come," he murmured, and sighed. He had waited a full half hour, with a patience that should be praised; and then he found a little excitement; a female's garb was visible, crossing one of the distant fields.

The young fellow nearly damaged his eyes, by trying to make out who it was. Then after the belief that this was not the one he waited for came to him, he still gazed on hopefully. But no; this was very far removed from the one. This was a very worthy woman of mature years, who trudged beneath a shawl and bonnet.

Ah, but now there was another figure just coming into view, and crossing between that small farmstead and the river; its gender was feminine, and its breadth was less than the first. In a few minutes, she had crossed the bridge over the Bloo. He who waited, recognized her, and hastened to meet her.

"I am so thankful that you have come," he said, after the first greeting.

"Indeed you ought, Mr. Heskitt," she said, pertly. "For I am running a great risk; and I don't know that I am not doing wrong, really."

"But why——" he began.

"It is very nice that I, who am under the guardianship of a careful aunt, should run two miles to meet a gentleman, and especially when my aunt has disapproved of the person."

"Am I a person?" He scarcely knew whether to be serious or jocular.

"And a pretty gossip there would be all over the valley, if I were seen near Cardley, strolling about in the company of a young man."

"It is very dreadful, certainly."

"It is no laughing matter. And I was silly to come. But you sent such a beseeching note, and it nearly fell into the hands of my aunt. And then what would have happened, Mr. Frank Heskitt?"

Mr. Frank didn't say; but his looks implied that it might be something very dreadful. He was hurt at the way the girl was talking; one hard word from her could pain him. She was on his left, and he kept his face turned full towards the right, away from his companion. And together they walked towards the old castle.

"I was a long time in deciding whether to come."

"I am sorry if I've offended you," he said, huskily. "My letter was not explicit, I know."

"Far from it," said the serious voice, but there was a suspicion of laughter in the eyes.

"There was a weighty reason, though. I leave Cardley early to-morrow morning."

She came to a sudden stop on the path, and stood earnestly serious now. "Leave Cardley?" she echoed.

"Yes, leave Cardley; and perhaps for ever."

They walked silently onward a little way, and then she went to him and gently laid her hand upon his shoulder.

"Forgive me," she pleaded; "I was joking, couldn't you see that." She slowly turned his face towards her. "No, you couldn't. There's too much water in your eyes."

Just then the young lady wondered what the aunt would say if she could see and hear this. So she immediately became calm and said, "I am sorry you are leaving our neighbourhood."

"Thank you."

"But we may see you again before long."

"You may; but—doubtful."

By this time, they had entered upon the path that led to the castle walls. They walked silently and went along the higher ground. The girl, deep in thought, sat upon the rustic-built seat, and Frank Heskitt stood dismally beside her.

"I thought you would like to say good-bye."

"I don't like to say good-bye to anyone. Any' one I like."

"Mab, don't trifle with me. It's dreadful! I'm leaving the girl I love, and I may never be able to come and claim her."

"It's doubtful whether the claim would be recognized—"

"Eh?"

"By my aunt and guardian. She'll never consent."

"Now let us calmly view our position. You are an infant—"

"What!"

"In the eyes of the law, I mean. You are seventeen—"

"And a half."

"Well, it is thus. You, Mabel Huron, spinster, not yet of age, and bound by your departed father's dying wish to, in all things, follow the instructions and advice of your father's sister and your aunt, Mrs. Pittar, of Bloo Valley, have—by force of your heart's desire and my pleading—settled a little of your affection upon a penniless young idler, Frank Heskitt by name."

"And you, Frank Heskitt, bachelor—you say, of age but not of discretion, have tried your utmost to make me treat with disrespect the commands of my aunt."

"Your aunt has no right to command. You are not a slave."

"No. Not yet," said Mabel, very demure.

"Do you think you may be, when—now Mab, that's not kind."

They sat for awhile, silently gazing upon the green valley.

"Mabel, I sometimes almost lose courage," he said at length; "and I begin to think that we are two ill-starred lovers. My dear but over-indulgent father, left me a year ago with five hundred pounds, and the tastes and training of a gentleman. I have spent the cash and retained the 'tastes.' Do you know dear, when we thought love would make us so happy, we never calculated food and shelter."

"I thought it was much too early to think of such things."

"Now I am afraid it was much too late. Some fellows are made to look ahead when they are about half my age, and here have I to start years behind. There is nothing but work for it, and I have heard of some dreadful accounts of the difficulty of making money now-a-days. And if I am unsuccessful, as many people are, we may never be able to get married, and we would both be old maids."

"Both old maids?"

"Well you know what I mean. So to prevent this dreadful calamity, I am going to start and work to-morrow."

"Poor fellow—at what?"

"Oh, it's something in the newspaper line."

"Not to hawk them or keep a stall?"

"Good gracious! No! An old school-fellow of mine is the editor of a daily paper at Larghampton, and he wants help. Said I might try if I could manage it, and it would suit me. I started learning shorthand last night; I wanted to learn it all at a sitting, but I afraid I must have patience. My friend, Janns, the editor, said if I could do anything else, I had better let journalism alone. That's a poor outlook, isn't it? But I can't do anything else."

"So you will adorn journalism?"

"Eh? Now, don't. Mab you are always laughing at me."

"You silly boy," she said in kindly tones, "I only try to cheer you, and if I am cheerful now a little, I shall make amends when I get home."

"What will you do then?"

"Have a good cry; unless I find a better occupation. But I dare not stay here, Frank. I shan't say good-bye, for I will come to-morrow at the same time. Keep up your heart."

She gave him her hand, and looked lovingly into his eyes. "Keep a good heart, Frank dear," she repeated. And, then turning quickly, she ran down the sloping path, and went back homeward through Bloo Valley.

Mrs. Pittar's residence and Mabel's home was a red brick house, fronted by a plain grass plot and a closely-cropped hedge. It was an isolated dwelling, for it had no companion of its kind near at hand. The dreariness prevailed indoors too, for Mrs. Pittar was partial to sober colouring; in fact, dullness, in her eyes was a duty, and she arrived at this morbid state of belief by deciding that this world was full of sin and sinners, and some other place was the goal. Mabel, who reasoned in another way, once said to her aunt: "You have never in all your life been very wicked; have you?" To which the lady, with an outraged and surprised look, said—

"Certainly not, child."

"Then, aunt, doesn't it seem hard that you should lead a life of penitence for sins you have not committed?" The explanatory remarks which followed, were not convincing to the girl, though they were dogmatically given. Although trained up in this staid and rigid atmosphere, where life was one continuous religious observance, and a dismal one too, Mabel was ever longing for a change that would bring merriment and brightness. She was not of the Puritan mould. But she had been taught to render an implicit obedience to her aunt, and in all outward matters she did this, and probably would so continue for some years to come.

When she arrived home after her stolen visit to Cardley Castle, she was told that her aunt had been asking for her. Mabel, with a slight tremor, went to her guardian. That lady's usual penitential expression was slightly relaxed.

"My child," she said,—it seemed a satisfaction to her to call Mabel, child,—“Your uncle Jacob has written from Australia.” This was not lively intelligence, for Uncle Jacob was a most uninteresting letter-writer, and almost the sum total of his messages were “that he was all well, and he hoped all friends were well also.” But Mrs. Pittar had more to say; Uncle Jacob had suggested that as he had no children, and was a widower, and pretty well-to-do, he would like to have some relation near him, who might share in the benefits which his income could bestow. Would his niece, Mabel, like to live in Australia?

Mrs. Pittar watched to see how this suggestion was received, and the result would, no doubt, puzzle her slightly.

Mabel's face first danced with a joy which could not be hidden, and then it became decidedly sorrowful.

"You shall go to Australia—to your uncle," said the aunt, turning to her book of daily exercises as though the journey was now fixed upon.

"When, aunt?"

"You will know in time."

Mabel was tempted to resent this cool and unconsulted way of having her future arranged, and she went from the room in no happy state of temper, but she was not rebel enough to show it. She went to her favourite nook in the house, and vented her spleen in half-spoken opinions of the habitation, the neighbourhood, her uncle Jacob, and her aunt; and she said nothing that was complimentary.

"Uncle Jacob is an old fool—he must be; I can tell it by his stupid letters. Australia is a big wilderness. Who wants to go there? And there

is no happiness in staying here either—a sepulchral old house, where one isn't allowed to hear the sound of one's own voice. People were never intended to live in misery, and be always groaning because the world might be better. My aunt, she's a silly old cat. And Frank will break his heart if I have to go—if I'm transported—to Australia."

But in a few days, Mabel discovered that preparations relating to a long-voyage had been begun, and were progressing at an alarming speed. Trunks specially designed for ocean travel were imported into Bloo Valley, and into the residence of Mrs. Pittar. Much inquiry was instigated into Australasian matters, and the attention of the household had never before been so much bestowed upon this planet—the earth. The movement had this recommendation in the eyes of Miss Mabel—it brought an unusual and healthy activity into the house. Had it not been for a sentimental fear that a prolonged, if not everlasting, parting from a certain useless, but ornamental young gentleman would be a dreadful sorrow, and an irretrievable loss, Mabel Huron would have set sail with great pleasure and satisfaction; but as it was, she thought herself a martyred heroine of the first grade.

And a new aspect was given to the pictured future, when she found, as she soon did, that her aunt was making ready, not alone for her niece's, but for her own journeying.

Yes, Mrs. Pittar was also going to New South Wales.

Mabel naturally wondered how her Uncle Jacob would regard this rendering of the wishes his letter contained, but she had small hope of any resistance from the well-to-do widower against the invasion of Mrs. Pittar, who was certainly not one to be easily repulsed, and whose strict ideas of Christian duty made her as stubborn as a rock.

But Jacob Youlls had plainly suggested that his niece should go and be installed as his heiress.

"I am pleased to find that your Uncle Jacob is alive to his duty, and wishes to place his money where it will work to the benefit of good."

This was Mrs. Pittar's sudden speech one day, after she had been sternly thinking for an hour or more.

Mabel looked up, amazed. This uncle they had never seen had certainly not put his desire in words which were tantamount to these.

"Yes," continued the aunt, "I am glad there is *that* much good in the world" (her opinion of the world was the worst conceivable, and she was full of charitable feelings towards her fellow-people!), "Jacob has not the gift of easy expression by written words, yet I can see his meaning. I hope he belongs to our denomination—I think he does."

At the final meeting between the lovers, before Frank Heskitt's departure, there were four damp eyes and much dismal forebodings of the future. But they arranged for safe communication, and so Heskitt was kept pretty well informed of Bloo Valley affairs as far as they concerned Miss Mabel. This projected Australian visit was a calamity, and one which Frank was unable to prevent. And the young man was not hitting journalism so quickly or so happily as he wished to do.

Very few weeks after the receipt of Uncle Jacob's letter, all preparations had been made, and the two ladies were to sail in a fortnight.

Mabel could not but smile at the unswerving way in which Mrs. Pittar was (as that lady expressed it) fulfilling her duty.

"Providence has placed this opportunity in my hands," the woman of unworldly thoughts said on one occasion, "and it is a sacred duty which I will perform, if life remains."

But Mrs. Pittar's piety was so fearfully stern and unsocial, for her to take Mabel into confidence was an unfrequent occurrence; so the girl was left to fill out many disjointed statements as best she could. She guessed that the "opportunity" had some reference to her uncle's money, but what it was that constituted the duty she could not imagine.

Bloo Valley looked particularly bleak on a certain morning; a penetrating north-easter swept over the vale. Though Mrs. Pittar often expressed a readiness to depart to a more ethereal clime, and that she was merely a bird of quick passage in her present state, still she took some care not to hurry her departure, but rather guarded against it, by sheltering herself against disease and illness. So whilst the cruel wind was astir, she kept indoors, and remained snug. She sat in a room which had warmth, but no brightness. The dark room was of a pattern with her sombre dress and sombre face. Suddenly the door opened, and some light and beauty entered rapidly, or, in other words, Mabel Huron came in with less ceremony than she usually employed when visiting her aunt in retirement.

"Aunt!" exclaimed the girl, "here is Uncle Jacob come all the way from Australia."

And Uncle Jacob himself bore testimony by standing rather sheepishly, and with his massive figure filling up the doorway.

Mrs. Pittar laid down her *Daily Crumbs of Comfort*, and so far forgot herself as to "bless her soul!" Then she looked at the visitor sternly, as though she was doubtful whether it would not be paying a too great heed to temporal matters, to show any interest in "Uncle Jacob." Herein Mrs. Pittar displayed a fine division of right and wrong: though she would not permit herself to show a great interest, she had little compunction in *feeling* it.

Mabel stood, her rosy lips and dark brown eyes smiling, her white teeth glittering, and her bushy black hair ruffled like open rebellion—perhaps the result of the visitor's avuncular salute.

Uncle Jacob was in tourist garb; the style might have been fashionable at Sydney when he left there, but in Britain it was three years old. He had an abundance of sandy hair on his head, but little on the face, a complexion to match, and a pair of large and good-humoured eyes. Jacob looked uneasy, but grinning, and said, "How are ye, ma'm?" In a few minutes, he was trying to make a clear statement in explanation of his sudden appearance.

"Y' see, ma'm," he began, in his prosy manner, "I thought to myself one day, Jacob thought I, you haven't been in England since you was a boy. So soon after I'd written my last letter that y've got, I says to myself, I think I'll go to the old country and hav' a look round. So away I come."

And now Jacob Youlls scarcely knew whether

he did, or did not, wish that he was back again. He was disappointed with Mrs. Pittar; to his ideas, she did not seem hospitable. He felt far happier when he turned and looked upon his niece.

"I've often wondered," he remarked in a conciliatory way, "what kind o' young lady my niece was, for ov course I never set eyes on her before, as indeed I never did on you, ma'm." But the poor man received so little encouragement, that he was obliged to pause here.

Mrs. Pittar at length told him that he was welcome to "her temporal abode," and that she hoped his visit to this country would be productive of instruction and good works; a wish which Mr. Youlls could in no way understand.

When uncle and niece were together, and away from the immediate presence of the mistress of the house, both felt the release, and Jacob, who had been gradually becoming miserable, smiled again. Both wished to speak of the same subject, but neither cared to say the first word.

"She looks a staid woman, does your aunt," Gallantry had eventually forced the man to speak, and he fell upon the subject that was troubling him.

It was with Mabel, as it is with many of us. Abuse is our own exclusive privilege—when certain friends are the object of it. Though Mabel harboured some bitterness against her aunt, and in her own mind, often made some disparaging comments, yet she instantly felt—when her uncle spoke—that if he said one word against her aunt she would hate him for it. So Mab replied: "She's a very good woman! A most upright woman! Some people misunderstand her."

Jacob looked as though he was glad to hear this; the fact that she might be misunderstood, seemed to give him the most satisfaction. Then the girl suddenly remembered something: her aunt had not mentioned to Mr. Youlls that they purposed sailing to Australia. So she told him.

"And *she* was going with you?" asked Jacob. The word *she* (so used) made the girl raise her eyebrows slightly.

"Oh yes," said Mabel, "I am in her custody until I am twenty-one; that was my poor father's express desire."

"How long have you to wait now?" he asked, plainly with interest.

"Three years and a half." Mabel was forced to laugh. Her uncle was such a natural man, whose face and voice *would* reflect his mind, do what he might.

However Mrs. Pittar soon thought it worth her while to descend from her saintly pedestal, and she talked with Mabel's uncle about his business operations and his future intentions. Her "Rays of Light" were often supplanted by Jacob Youlls' recital of his own success in life. Mabel thought this a great change in her aunt. Furthermore, Mrs. Pittar's usual severity was relaxed in favour of the visitor, as though she wished to conciliate him. If this was her intention, it was only partly successful, but in that Jacob was not to blame. He would have liked Mrs. Pittar if he could; he tried, but could not. Mrs. Pittar would have gained Jacob's confidence and appeared as an agreeable woman—in his eyes, but she had acquired a manner which was not helpful to the making of friendships.

"I was seriously thinking of going to Australia, and taking Mabel with me," the lady said to Youlls, about a week after his arrival in the vale.

"Fine country!" remarked Jacob, in approval.

"And I may go soon. A little persuasion would make me decide."

"Go back with me," he said, desiring to be hospitable.

"I will," said Mrs. Pittar. And the uncle was not certain that he was glad, when he heard his rash proposal accepted.

So the preparations were recommenced, and Uncle Jacob was thoughtful and full of wonder when he considered what he had added to his household, for some time at least.

Between the colonial gentleman and Mabel, a great affection soon grew up. Probably because none other in the house had feelings and sympathies in common with these two; and yet in some respects they stood at extreme points, one to the other. A simple, uncultured, and middle-aged man; an intelligent, pretty, and sensitive girl. But somehow they got to look to each other for recreation and for advice.

Mabel had told her uncle of her attachment, and asked his opinion as to what should or could be done. If his whole fortune had been involved in the decision, he could not have given the question more careful thought. But he was between two fires. Mabel would not hear of the slightest spark of rebellion against her aunt, and Mrs. Pittar had made the law, that her niece should never move one step towards matrimony until she was twenty-one, and so out of her care. Such decrees as these made up the enjoyment of Mrs. Pittar's life; she rejoiced in making martyrs; and had much in common with the torturing idolators whose mental darkness she so deeply pitied.

Whether Jacob Youlls nightly dreamt of his niece and her lover we have no means of knowing, but he certainly seemed to devote the greater part of the day in thinking and talking about their welfare. This man of many Australian acres, was like a fearing truant school-boy, in the way he would shuffle from Mrs. Pittar's presence and commence to talk treason with Mabel.

The drab stony road near where the house stood, was the favourite scene of the pairs disloyalty. But so far they had both been very feeble plotters.

When Uncle Jacob's visit was three weeks old, and two days before he was to leave the valley, for a few weeks tour of Britain, he set out in the morning with Mabel, both bent upon a walk to Cardley town; and—much unbenefitting talk by the way.

"Well, Mab, anything from *the* party this morning?" asked Jacob, as a preliminary, and directly they were out of earshot of the house.

Mabel blushed, because this inquiry reminded her of her duplicity. Mrs. Pittar, of course, had taken office as the supervisor of all the girl's actions, and for a letter to have come by her majesty's mail without the cognizance of the aunt, was an improbability. So Mr. Frank Heskitt addressed to Miss Mabel Huron under care of the good people who held the farm a quarter of a mile away from the red-brick house. And Mabel seldom failed to find an early opportunity of skipping down soon after the post carrier had passed, that is—on such mornings as she expected a letter.

"Yes," she said, in reply to her uncle, "and Frank is very down-hearted."

Jacob's countenance fell to the level of this dire intelligence. "Lor, is he really?" And then he sank into deep thought for quite three minutes, which is a long spell to walk in silence. Then he woke up again, and ceased to gaze at the panorama of the rutted road, and spoke.

"Now you go to Australia, and yer aunt goes."

"Oh!" said Mabel, discontently, "that is settled beyond hope of escape, I'm afraid."

"Don't be afraid," said Jacob, with a tremble in his voice. And after that, he said little more until they had reached the castle of Cardley and were walking upon its broad surrounding path. This absence of speech, when Youlls and his niece went abroad together, was so unusual, that he apparently thought some kind of explanation was needed, for the circumstance must have a cause.

"Y'see, Mah, in Australia there's only few people, and in some parts y'may get, y're very much alone. I've been alone for weeks, with nothing but a dog and my pipe—yer aunt doesn't regard pipes—" (this as a whisper'd parenthesis) "but there's much company in 'em at such times. And with having no human being that could talk to me, or me to them, I got such a habit of thinking and thinking." He spoke the last few words with slow emphasis, and then laughed at the humour of such a peculiarity. "Always thinking and thinking."

Perhaps Uncle Jacob considered that having made an excuse for the acquirement of his habit of deep thought, he had now more liberty for an indulgence in that habit; certainly he had many hours of "thinking" during the remaining two days of his stay at Bloo Valley.

When Jacob Youlls had gone on his tour, Mrs. Pittar resumed what might be called, her normal condition; the same stiff severity from which as a hostess, she had lately just occasionally unbended. She acknowledged, almost with an air of complaint, that she was rather disappointed with Uncle Jacob; "his mind and aspirations were much given to the world," she said, "and he did not strive as he should, to put his wealth to the uses for which it had been bestowed upon him."

Mabel was sorry when she found that her poor uncle had been urged by Mrs. Pittar to give largely to certain charities, and she wondered if the dear, easy old fellow had really been made to suffer by pecuniary disbursement.

Jacob wrote occasionally to his niece, but he never got beyond a statement as to where he was, what he had seen, and his never-omitted "am all well, and hope all of you are well also."

And the weeks went quickly, and brought with them the day upon which Mr. Youlls was to return to his adopted land, and take Mrs. Pittar and Mabel with him. The red-house and its contents had been sold, and its late owner had gathered together whatever money she possessed—she was only poor. The belle of Bloo Valley had nothing to take beyond her wardrobe and her good looks. They sailed from Southampton, and Mabel's eyes were red with tears, for she was leaving her native land, perhaps for ever, and without one parting word from her lover. It was either an accident, or Frank had been very cruel, she decided, for her last letter to him had gained no answer.

When they were a little way out, the wild sea wind frolicked around Mrs. Pittar as if it would like to take the primness out of her. Uncle Jacob had never looked so happy since the day of his landing in England, at least; and his tongue incessantly wagged for very joy. He had persuaded Mrs. Pittar to stay on deck for awhile, and Mabel had been sent down to the cabin for some of the books which her aunt read almost daily, and read them as though they were intended as a prevention against cheerfulness. Before the girl had carried the books to where her aunt sat, she found cause for a sudden exclamation, and such a start, that the books toppled over and were strewn upon the deck. A smiling young man advanced and helped Mab to recover her cargo; and both blushed.

Uncle Jacob saw an opportunity and took it.

"Mrs. Pittar," said he, "allow me to introduce a young gentleman that I am taking back with me as my—my—well, my manager. Mr. Frank Heskitt, Mrs. Pittar."

The lady was bewildered, she had heard of this young man, and had fervently hoped that she would never hear of him again. Her unflinching eye rested in turn upon all three; then she smelt treachery, and sternly rose and went down to her cabin.

But she had all the gall to herself; the others were happy.

Mrs. Pittar did not again appear on deck for some few days, and when she came she was white-faced and feeble. This illness incidental to the sea, had also tried the reality of the woman's daily professions of fortitude and content; it is only fair to say that she had come fairly triumphantly through the ordeal.

During a conversation, Uncle Jacob spoke thus: "We all has tastes, for which human nature is often responsible. Some like to be serious, some 'ud rather be laughing. I sometimes like to think. Now, is it right as we should force others to do as we do. No. For as long as we do right, it doesn't matter whether we do it pleasantly or unpleasantly. I mean, pleasantly or seriously. I left England without subscribing one ha'penny to any of the charities you recommended; for one reason, I didn't think I could do it *spontaneous*, another was, I wanted my money for another purpose. That girl there has no friend but you—and me. She has no father. I'll be a father to her, and what I have shall be hers. But she must be *let alone*; she's right-minded, and nice, and natural. You've got more learning out o' books, Mrs. Pittar, but I've met more people and I done a deal of thinking. Human nature won't be stopped without a struggle. (That's a nice young fellow that.) Let Mab be as my daughter, and all's well. If you don't like that, well, things are as they are, and all's well still."

Frank Heskitt and Mabel Huron came up together just then; both looking very guilty but very happy.

Uncle Jacob's views were agreed to.

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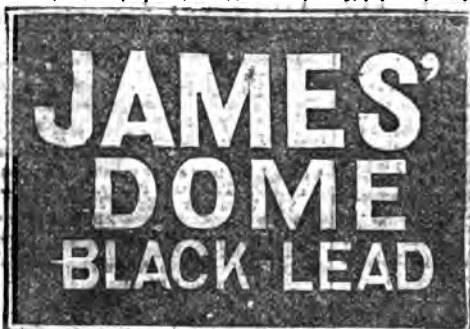
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

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A PUZZLE FOR THE POLICE.

BY LAURA VALENTINE.

CHAPTER I.

MY NEW HOME.

NEVER was any one less fitted than I—Mary Lester—to earn her own bread; yet, when my father's death left his widow with only a hundred and fifty pounds a year to support herself and two daughters, of whom one was a confirmed and helpless invalid, it became a duty for me to do so. But what could I do?—My father, a clergyman, had educated me himself, and I was well acquainted with English literature, but I had no accomplishments; I could not draw or play on any instrument, and my French would have been scarcely intelligible to a Parisian. The thoroughly sound education I could have given, was disdained by those to whom I applied for the situation of governess, and I began to despair.

My mother declared that my fruitless applications were caused much more by my appearance than by my lack of "music;" for in her eyes I am exceptionally pretty, and, to confess the truth, I think I am rather nice-looking, and might pass for a beauty, if I were not so unconquerably shy and nervous. She believes that a jealous fear of my good looks influenced the worthy matrons who rejected my proffered services; but I believe my nervous, shy manner, may have acted against me. With no confidence in myself, I failed naturally to inspire it in others.

But all things come to those who wait. At last, my opportunity came. A certain Mrs. Llewellyn Apreece heard of me, and called at our lodgings in Wrexham to inquire about me, and ascertain if I should suit her as a companion. Fortunately I did; albeit she certainly did not suit me, for her manner was extremely disagreeable; pompous, and dictatorial in the extreme. She seemed to fill our small room with her majestic presence and her sweeping draperies; her voice

was loud and impressive, and the duties she enumerated were trying. But what could I do? She offered me eighty pounds a year, "because," she said, "she expected me to dress well, as I should always be in her presence, and she might require some rather important services from me."

"Confidential services," she added, mysteriously, "for I hear everywhere, Miss Lester, that you are entirely to be trusted."

The eighty pounds a year was a temptation to accept her proposal greater than people more happily circumstanced can quite understand, and I agreed to go to her at once, in spite of a look of warning from my sister Grace.

When Mrs. Apreece was gone, however, my mother (who had not caught the lady's last remark) was told by Gracie of the "confidential services," and became rather alarmed.

"Of course," she decided, "Mary must not go till I have ascertained all about Mrs. Apreece."

And she forthwith put on bonnet and cloak, and went into the town to enquire about my future employer.

"Mary," said Grace, when we were alone, "you never can live with that woman. She will suffocate you with pomposity. And it might be most unpleasant to receive her confidences. What can they be?"

"Perhaps she paints and enamels," said I, laughing, "and is afraid to trust to her maid's taste."

"Nonsense, Mary," said my sister, "she was not painted; she is rather handsome, though she has a hard, unpleasantly cross expression. You had much better not go to her."

"But I must," I answered, gravely, "our mother is sorely pinched for money just now, and only think how much I shall be able to spare of eighty pounds, Grace. You shall have a nice soft sofa the first thing instead of that hard horse-hair affair."

My mother returned in about an hour with a favourable account of Mrs. Apreece's respectability. The famous physician of the place had attended Mr. Apreece in his last illness; in fact (he told

my mother) Mr. Apreece had bought Plas Gwenn, that he might put himself under Dr. Williams's care.

"I had known him many years," added the doctor, "and highly esteemed him. He was a man of good old Welsh family. Mrs. Apreece is English, and has a large fortune of her own. Her attention to her husband during his last illness was most exemplary. I think Miss Lester would find a good home at Plas Gwenn."

"But," continued my mother, "Mrs. Edwards" (who generally knows everything), "says that Mrs. Apreece is constantly changing her servants, and is said to be 'fidgety and worrying' by them. However, one cannot quite trust to those kind of rumours. I wish it were Grace, however, rather than you, Mary, who was going to live with this lady. You are so timid; you might be easily crushed. I hope you will not suffer yourself to be made unhappy. You can always come home, you know, my dear."

A week after this I was installed at Plas Gwenn as Mrs. Apreece's companion.

It was a fine old place, situated on a mountain side, and sheltered by magnificent old trees. Mrs. Apreece received me very courteously, and after a brief chat showed me at once to my room. To my surprise it was inside her own! That is, I had to walk through her room to reach it. It was a small square chamber, very nicely furnished, with a bright fire burning in it; a writing-table and small bookcase being added to the usual furniture.

"You are surprised to find that your room has no access except through my own," she said, "but I will let you know the reason very soon. I hope you like it. There are good closets you see," and she opened two doors near the fireplace, showing me most desirable closets for keeping dresses, and another fitted as a bath room. "You will perceive," she added, "that there is a keyhole in the wall yonder; well, that also is a closet which I reserve for myself. I have the key."

I said that the room was very comfortable, and that I especially appreciated the writing table and books. She smiled.

"Oh," she said, "I have heard that you are a learned young lady, though you don't look at all strong-minded; and sometimes I may be obliged to ask you to keep in your room for a day. You will not mind obliging me so far?"

I was extremely surprised, but I was far too shy to ask *why*, or to make any objection, so I murmured an assent.

Thus began my life at Plas Gwenn. I was fairly contented. Mrs. Apreece was kind after her light; that is, she spoke courteously to me, but she kept me constantly employed.

I wrote endless notes for her on business, or to report to friends of her health, when she did not choose to answer a letter; and I read aloud to her for hours, till my voice failed from hoarseness. I never had a moment to myself. If I were not writing or reading aloud, I was finishing work for her, or,—much more wearisome for me—assisting her with my opinion on her dress. She was leaving off her mourning, and having new dresses made which she insisted on putting on me, to see how they looked, though she was about twice my size round. "It was the effect she studied," she said, "not the fit." But this whim gave me hours of standing. In fact I was

never away from Mrs. Apreece an hour in the day, and I believe she was studying me carefully all the time; but I was well-paid for my time, and of these somewhat trying duties I do not complain. But I was not happy, because Mrs. Apreece managed to make me thoroughly afraid of her; I never could tell why. She was sarcastic certainly, and often stopped my girlish chat with a sneer—but though this increased my shyness, it could not account for the fear I had of offending her. An instinct seemed to tell me that she was pitiless.

We had many visitors, and my services were often required in helping to entertain them. I fear, however, my efforts were of very little value, owing to my extreme shyness and timidity.

On the day Mrs. Apreece paid me my first quarter's salary, she allowed me to go and see my mother and sister, and all my annoyances fled at once before my mother's glad smile and grateful kiss, as I put nearly all my earnings into her hand.

But Grace, as she kissed me, whispered "Mary, that gold is dearly bought I fear. Why are you so pale, and why have you such a frightened look in your eyes? Are you happy, dear?"

"Oh, Gracie," I answered. "I never can be very happy away from home, and I cannot like Mrs. Apreece. She is not unkind; but she sneers at nearly everything I say, and I never am out of her sight. I feel as if her eyes were never off me and it makes me afraid of her. Even at night I don't feel free; for my room is inside her own, that is I have to walk through her room to leave it; or go into it, and she insists on my wedging my door."

"She must be making you her guard over a treasure," said Grace, jestingly.

"Oh, no," I replied, "I have heard her say very often that her jewels are all kept at the bank; and she pays everything by cheques. I have just had one changed. I think it is simply her whim, to have me by her at night; she is very arbitrary," and I could not help sighing.

"Mary," said my sister, wistfully, "I wish some rich man would marry you and take you out of your enchanted castle. You are prettier than ever, darling, with your delicate paleness and your startled-looking blue eyes—so beseeching and pathetic in expression. How I wish I could take your place! I should not mind Mrs. Apreece's domineering ways the least."

"Oh!" I replied, "but you have not experienced the power some people have of making others thoroughly uncomfortable."

CHAPTER II.

A CASKET OF RUBIES.

CHRISTMAS was over, and the New Year opened. Mrs. Apreece was out of mourning and accepted invitations; amongst others, one from the greatest house in North Wales. It was for a ball, and a most elaborate dress for it had been sent to her, in which she looked extremely well. She asked me what jewels would best suit it, and I answered—to my after-grief—"rubies," the dress being of soft grey and rose colour. She smiled, and said I was right; she would wear rubies.

That morning, also, she told me that she had invited a nephew of hers, who had just returned

from India, to stay with her, and that she had secured for him an invitation to the ball.

"It will be as well to have a gentleman for my escort," she added, "as the drive is rather a lonely one."

The nephew's name was, she told me, Edward Jones, and he was a captain in the army. But a few days before that fixed for the ball, Mrs. Apreece caught cold, and was confined to her bed. Nevertheless, she would not give up the idea of going to it. I perceived that she thought it all important as an introduction to the county society, and she did everything she could to cure the tiresome disorder that threatened to keep her from it. Nevertheless, the day before the ball came, and she was still suffering, though she was able to sit up in her room by the fire. I found her, when she sent for me that morning very much put out by her continued illness.

"I wanted," she said, "to have gone into Wrexham to-day, but that is impossible, if I hope to be able to go to-morrow night to the ball, therefore, I shall be obliged to send you, Mary. In the first place I shall want you to go to the bank, and bring from it a casket of jewels, which you must open with my key and see that it is full and all right, and then *most carefully* bring home with you. Remember, it must never leave your hands till you put it into mine. And in order that you may fully comprehend the importance of the trust, I must tell you something about myself and my father. Sit down child, and listen."

I obeyed her, and she continued, "My father was, as you may have heard, a very rich diamond-merchant, or rather, a jewel-merchant, for he dealt in, and loved all kinds of gems. There is a story told of a jeweller in Paris in Louis XIV.'s reign, who had such a passionate love for his precious stones that, if he reluctantly sold them he afterwards recovered them by a crime. The purchaser was sure to be murdered, and the gems to disappear. My dear father was (I need scarcely say), incapable of such wickedness; but he also yielded to the fascination of the beautiful, sparkling gems on which he so often gazed, and of which he was an almost infallible judge; and this love for them caused him to make a singular will. He possessed a ruby necklace, which he declared never had been, and never could be equalled, so large, lustrous, and perfect were the stones. By great efforts, he had succeeded in procuring gems of the same kind and nearly as fine, for a bracelet and earrings; and he would never sell these, his best loved possessions. Well, when he died he left me a splendid collection of jewels—the ruby necklace amongst the rest—with these conditions: I was neither to sell, lend, nor pawn the rubies; if I did, my fortune was to pass (with the jewels) to the heir-at-law—a man whom I had always detested, but who had flattered my father by pretending to share his hobby. If I lost them, my fortune was to make them good to my cousin. As you may imagine, my husband and myself have proved very careful guardians of the gems. During his life-time we kept them in an iron case built into the wall; but when he came here, and he was so ill, he made me take them to the Bank, and there they still are. Now Mary, that is the confidence I told you that I meant to place in you. While the jewels are in the house, I shall put them into the closet I keep locked in your room, and I shall

want you to remain in your chamber all the next day—in fact till I restore the gems to the care of the Bank."

"But Mrs. Apreece," I said nervously, "I am really afraid to undertake such a charge; I am indeed."

"Oh, never mind, your fears will ensure the safety of my casket," she said, "and there is no one I can trust to do it but you. You will have Edward Jones to escort you home, for he arrives by the five train, and you must meet him and bring him back; but, remember, you had better not get out of the carriage, nor let the casket out of your hand for a single moment."

"If only you would excuse me," I pleaded, "it is such a dreadful charge."

"Do not be so absurd," said the lady with a frown. "Anyone would think you were a baby to hear you! Can't you hold a box in your hand for an hour or so in safety? If I can trust you, that is enough; and I must say I place perfect reliance in you, Mary."

There was no more to be said; it was plain that I must obey Mrs. Apreece, disagreeable as the responsibility was, therefore I was ready when the carriage came to the door to go into the town. Mrs. Apreece gave me a note to the manager of the bank, and two keys—one smaller than the other, and of gold. The largest one she told me was to open the box he would have brought out to me; the other for me to unlock the jewel case and glance in to see that all was right, and that the rubies were there. "You will have to give him a receipt for the casket," she added—"We know him well and trust him entirely."

I drove off with a strange presentiment of evil hanging over me. The day was very gloomy; heavy clouds hung over the hills, and the wind howled through the valley. I had started early, for I had several commissions to do for Mrs. Apreece before I went at half-past three to the bank on my disagreeable errand. She had requested the manager in her note to let me wait in his room after I had done my business till half-past four, then I was to drive to the station and take up Captain Jones on his arrival; the time between closing the bank and the arrival of the train leaving an awkward interval.

I had permission to call on my mother and sister before I went to the bank, and of course I availed myself of it.

When I told them my errand, both looked grave.

"My dear Mary," said my mother, "pray keep on the alert, and don't go into one of your absent fits while you have the casket in your care."

"Mrs. Apreece should have let the bank people send her casket to her," said Grace, "but, Mary, I think you had better not have mentioned what you are going to do, even to us. Do not speak of it any more, but, as our mother says, be careful, and don't go into a day-dream."

At half-past three I called at the bank, was courteously received by the manager, and took out of an iron-bound oak box the precious casket. I opened it before him, saw that the jewels were there, and gave him an acknowledgment of the receipt of it. He good-naturedly remained with me after the bank had closed, till the carriage came; then he put me into it, grasping my treasure.

When I left the bank I was surprised to see that it was snowing heavily. The snow had begun to fall before I left my mother's lodgings, but only slightly; now it was coming down fast. However, we drove to the station, and waited there until the train came in. Then David, the footman, went in to meet Captain Jones. By this time it was nearly dark. By-and-by, however, the brougham door was opened and David said, "Captain Jones," as a tall military-looking figure presented itself.

I bowed, and he stepped in, asking if he might have a hat box put inside. Of course I assented. Then we drove off.

"I hope," he said, "my aunt is well?" His voice was very pleasant.

"No," I answered, "she has a very severe cold, and is confined to her bed, so she sent me."

"She was very kind," he said, "but I am sorry you should have had the trouble, such a day as this too."

And there was surprise in his tones.

"Oh," I said, "I came on other errands also. I am your aunt's companion."

"Indeed! Well I daresay she was lonely after her husband's death. What a wild afternoon it is!"

For the wind was now blowing boisterously.

"The wind is very high," I replied, "and I am afraid it will drift the snow in the valley."

"I have not seen snow before for many years," said Captain Jones, "it is pleasant to behold it again and have one's memory of snowballing revived."

"You have been in India," I said timidly, "It must be pleasant to live in perpetual sunshine."

"One may have too much of a good thing," he laughed. "In India one often wishes for a cool breeze and a cloudy sky."

And then, as if he wished to amuse me, he began telling me of the great heat of the East and of the monsoon rains, and talked so pleasantly, that I forgot in listening to him, the heavy charge with which I was burdened. Still I held it tightly all the time.

We found that the snow had drifted in the valley, and it was some time before we could make our way through it. In another hour it became impassable.

On our arrival, I desired the other footman to conduct Captain Jones to his room, and I hastened to Mrs. Apreece and put the casket into her hands. She was in bed.

"Did you see that it was all right," she whispered, for her maid was in the room.

"Yes, it is all right."

"Then lock it up in your room. Here is the key of the closet."

She slipped it into my hand. I went at once and put the casket away, and took her back the key. She put it under her pillow.

"You brought Captain Jones back?" she asked.

"Yes, he is gone to his room; will you see him?"

"Not to-night. He is almost a stranger to me; I only saw him once, about ten years ago, and then he was a schoolboy at Harrow. You must amuse him this evening, Mary—but before you go down, lock your door, and give me the key to keep till you come to bed."

I obeyed her in all things, and joined Captain Jones in the drawing-room just before dinner.

Then, seeing him distinctly, I perceived that he was a very handsome young man with a bright happy face.

It was a pleasant dinner. My companion was so frank and cheery in manner that I gradually lost my usual shyness, and talked freely with him, as I never had done with any guest of Mrs. Apreece's before.

He made me laugh by relating many funny anecdotes of Anglo-Indian life, and I was glad that he rose and went with me to the drawing-room when dinner was over.

We were standing by the fire, still laughing and chatting, when Sims, the old butler, entered and said—

"Miss Lester! If you please will you go to Mrs. Apreece?"

Of course, I obeyed immediately, and found my employer sitting up in bed, holding a telegram in her hand.

"Mary," she exclaimed, in a high-pitched voice, "what does this mean? Here is a telegram from Edward Jones saying that he has missed the last train and cannot be here till to-morrow, yet you brought back a Captain Jones with you!"

I looked as I felt, thoroughly bewildered.

"Yes," I said at last, "He is here."

"But, he must be an impostor," she exclaimed, vehemently—"a swell mob's man perhaps, whom you have mistaken for a gentleman."

"But indeed," I said, with sudden courage,—"he is not. He is a gentleman even if he is not *your* Captain Jones; there must be some mistake."

"How was that possible on his part? There may be two Captain Joneses (or many more), but there is only one Mrs. Apreece of Plas Gwenn. He heard my name of course from you or David."

"I don't know, I said, reflecting, "David may have named it; but now I think of it, we spoke of you as his aunt only—at least I believe so."

"Most unlikely that you should not have named your employers," she said, arrogantly, "and very disrespectful also. Go down at once, and let this person know that I have received a telegram from my nephew, and that I wish to know who he is."

I hurried to obey her, and found Captain Jones standing where I had left him, looking into the fire, smiling to himself.

I put the telegram into his hand, saying—

"Mrs. Apreece has just received this telegram, and she wishes to know what it means?"

He read the telegram.

"Jones? Oh, a namesake I see. I have legions of them,—but who is Mrs. Apreece?"

"Why, your aunt—the owner of Plas Gwenn—this house," I answered. "Are you not the Captain Jones who was expected?"

"I fear not, for I know nothing of Plas Gwenn, or of Mrs. Apreece," he answered, looking into my face with his bright smile.

"Then, who are you?" I asked in great alarm.

"I am Captain Edward Jones of the Artillery, and I came on a visit to my Aunt Mary Trevor. When I arrived at the station, a footman came up to me—I was the only arrival,—touched his hat, and said,—

"If you please, sir, are you Captain Edward Jones?" I answered, 'Yes!' Then he said,

"The carriage is waiting, Sir, outside for you. What luggage have you?" That was all. It appears that some other Edward Jones was expected."

I explained at once the mistake. He laughed heartily.

"What a joke!" he said, "and yet rather an awkward one. Be so good, Miss Lester, as to go at once, and apologize for me to Mrs. Apreece, and ask if I may send her servant for a conveyance to take me to my real Aunt Mary's? Assure her that I am much distressed. By-the-by, I have cards in my pocket; take her one, please."

And he gave me his card, and I returned with his message, to Mrs. Apreece's great discomfort.

"I never heard of such a stupid mistake," she said, "Miss Lester, you must be quite wanting in respect for me, never to have even named me to this stranger. Why did not you tell him that Mrs. Apreece had sent you?"

"I do not know," I replied, "I told him his aunt was ill in bed, and had sent me."

"You did not tell him for what you had been sent?" she asked suspiciously.

"Of course not," I answered; "I said on some errands."

"Well, we must get rid of him as soon as we can, of course. Tighe," to her maid, "go and tell one of the men to put to the brougham, and take this Captain Jones where he ought to have gone."

Tighe had heard the whole conversation.

"If you please ma'am," she said, "Mrs. Trevor's place is a good twelve miles away, and I heard Mr. Sims say just now, that the carriage was only just back in time, or the valley would have been impassable from the snow."

"Go at once and tell the coachman to send to the village for a fly: the journey must be attempted. This stranger cannot remain here. Really, Mary," she continued, when the maid had left the room, "I have no patience with you. I always thought you dull and stupid, but I believed you had common sense. It seems you are wanting in it, and that you lack all sense of propriety and respect also. Of course you should have asked this man if he were Mrs. Apreece's nephew, and if he was going to Plas Gwenn. Or at least, if you thought David knew him you should have mentioned my name and my illness."

"He asked me if his aunt were well," I answered, "I said no, but confined to her room with a cold."

"Only *she*, not Mrs. Apreece, I see," she went on angrily, "Well, I must say I should have expected better manners from you—and you talked all the way home and yet never named me? or sat stupidly silent? How was it?"

I made no reply. Mrs. Apreece was too angry to listen to reason, and in a minute or two Tighe returned, and said that the coachman declared no man could reach the valley for the snow, and if he did, the job-master would not send out his horse, he was sure, on such a night.

"In short," said Mrs. Apreece, "thanks to the stupidity of my servants, I am to have a strange man here all night! How can I tell that he has not stolen this card? He may be a professional burglar. Well it can't be helped! Tighe, tell the butler to keep good guard over the plate, and David had better sleep in the blue room, to be near us to night."

"In the blue room, Ma'am!" cried Tighe, "that's the haunted chamber. He'll never sleep there, none of the servants would."

And she was right. David was willing to sit up all night in the corridor or just outside the door that led to it, but he resolutely declined to have anything to do with the ghost, "he'd sooner lose his place."

These contradictions infuriated Mrs. Apreece, whose terrible temper then fully manifested itself; and it was vented on me in a perfect storm of abuse. I was too frightened to answer her, and when at length she ordered me to go down and see that "my friend," "the man I had picked up, did not steal anything," I went out into the corridor and had a good cry before I obeyed her.

With red eyes, trembling, and sick at heart, I at last joined our unwelcome guest in the drawing room. He came towards me as I entered.

"I am very sorry to hear," he said, "that we are snowed in, and that I cannot relieve Mrs. Apreece of my presence; the more sorry as I fear the mistake has caused you some vexation," glancing pityingly at my tear-swollen face.

"Oh, never mind me," I answered, "I fear your own friends, as well as Mrs. Apreece, have cause to blame me for not mentioning her name, or Plas Gwenn, all the time we were driving."

"It was rather strange that you did not," he allowed, with a twinkle of fun in his eyes.

"I dare say I should have done so, only you amused me so very much," I answered candidly, "that I forgot all about everything else."

He looked gratified.

"You are a charming listener, Miss Lester," he said. "I also forgot to speak of my Aunt and her home, under another kind of spell, a more powerful one," he added under his breath.

Just then Sims brought in the tea, and I had to attend to my ordinary duty of pouring it out.

Captain Jones appeared then to forget all about his unpleasant position, and was wonderfully agreeable and kind. He told me all about his aunt, Mrs. Trevor.

"She brought me up," he said, "from my orphaned infancy, and is the kindest of friends to me still. Since I have been in India she has succeeded to a fine Welsh property, and I am on my way to pay a visit to her now."

Then he asked me if my parents were living, and by degrees I was led to tell him all about our family. I think he saw that I had not a very happy home, for he said, "If ever you leave Plas Gwenn, Miss Lester, and you will kindly let me know, I will get my Aunt to look out for a situation for you."

Then the candles were brought and I wished Captain Jones good-night. He held my hand for a moment and said,

"I am cruel enough to be glad of the mistake, since it has made me acquainted with you."

Those words sent me to bed far happier than I had expected. But Mrs. Apreece was still cross, and scolded for some time before she let me go into my room, ordering me to take the key of the closet into my room and to put it under my own pillow, "for then," she added, "you alone are responsible for my rubies if any attempt is made on them. Fasten my door securely, and your own. I should think you would rather wish to wake and watch over your charge than go to bed."

"I will do so if you wish it," I said, meekly.
 "Then I do wish it. Under the circumstances I think you ought."

And thus it happened that I sat up to watch Mrs. Apreece's rubies all night.

I took off my dress, however, and put on my dressing-gown and slippers, and let down and brushed my hair. Then I made up a good fire and ensconced myself in my easy chair with a book; but I could not read; my heart was in a perfect flutter of emotion. Mrs. Apreece's cruel insults and Captain Jones's words of kindest courtesy alike disturbed my thoughts, and the book was soon laid aside for the indulgence of reverie.

But a young girl is not naturally wakeful, and the warmth of the fire, the soft-sighing of the wind which sank as the night advanced, and the fatigue caused by the emotions of the day overpowered me, and I fell into a profound sleep which lasted unbroken till the daylight awoke me.

Then I started up, chilly and bewildered, scarcely knowing where I was at first, but I soon remembered and glanced fearfully round me. Thank heaven, the door was fastened as I left it; the wall gave no appearance of the closet's having been opened. Everything was safe.

I went into the kind of closet that had been fitted with a bath adjoining my room, bathed, dressed, and waited for Mrs. Apreece's maid to summon me to go through her room, which she did generally when she called her mistress. But Mrs. Apreece that morning sent her to light my fire (much to her annoyance) and desired me (by her) not to leave my room.

I understood that she meant me to continue my watch; but Tighe believed that she was punishing me like a schoolgirl, and muttered as she lighted her match.

"What next I wonder? I'm to do housemaid's work, and folks are to be locked up because of a mistake, I know I won't put up with it."

I pretended not to hear her, but I was vexed and humiliated all the same, and could not set her right if I had wished to do so. I was very vexed—I had hoped to see Captain Jones at breakfast, and now I should not: and it was horrid to be shut up in my room all day, and for the servants to believe that I was punished like a child, and that I submitted to it! I was still girl enough to feel this last fact bitterly.

About noon Mrs. Apreece came to my room. She was very much better and had been downstairs.

"But," she told me, "I have not seen the sham Captain Jones; he left before I was up, and put a note of apology on the table for me. So I trust we have escaped any further annoyance. You will remain here as long as the rubies are under your care, remember."

And she left the room; nor did I see her again till past four o'clock. Then she came in, in good spirits.

"My nephew has arrived," she said, "all right, though rather late. Now I want to see all my dress put out ready. Give me the box with the rubies: I should like to see them by daylight."

I took the key from my bosom where it had remained all night and all day, and opened the closet.

It was empty!

I looked at the bare shelves in blank consternation; then I gasped out, "Where is it?"

"Where is what?" demanded Mrs. Apreece angrily—"Give me the casket?"

"It is gone," I faltered. "The closet is empty."

"Gone!" she cried, "impossible!" and she pushed me angrily aside and looked in; then examined every corner of the large shelves—(there were only two). But there was absolutely *nothing* in the closet!

"You put the box in?" she demanded, facing me then with a terrible look in her eyes.

"Indeed, I did," I assured her, "and carefully locked the door, and gave you the key, till I came to bed; since then it has never left my bosom."

"You were awake, watching, all night?"

"I sat up," I said, "but I was not awake the whole time; I fell asleep. But no one could have come in; the door was fastened, and your door also."

"What am I to think?" she cried. "Good heavens! what can have become of my rubies? What shall I do?"

And she wrung her hands in an agony of distress.

"You may have put that casket in one of your drawers, and forgotten," she said—after an instant, "Look in them all; and in your own closets."

I obeyed willingly. We turned out my closets, and every drawer and box, but still we could not find that mysterious casket. Then, standing amidst the confusion we had made, Mrs. Apreece broke out with the words—

"You never could have put the casket in the closet. You have robbed me!—Given it to the confederate, no doubt, that you brought home last night. Speak!—confess! and I will forgive you! Oh, Mary! I have trusted you so entirely. I have told you how much depends on those jewels. Confess at once!"

Dreadfully shocked, I assured her most solemnly and indignantly that I knew nothing of the casket—that I had not seen it since I placed it in the closet.

"If it has been taken—as it has, apparently,—it must have been taken while I was down stairs," I declared, roused even to anger.

"The key was under my own pillow," declared Mrs. Apreece. "No one could have taken it without my knowing it."

Yet the thought checked her invective.

"Did you look if it was safe when you went to your room for the night?" she asked.

"No; I did not want to open the closet at all, till you were with me."

"But you ought to have looked," she declared; "it was shameful neglect not to have done so. I must go and speak to my nephew. Do not leave this room till I return."

And she rendered my obedience certain, by locking her own door as she went out.

I sat down petrified, terrified, wounded, humiliated, and above all, perplexed. What could have become of the rubies?

After an interval, which seemed to me endless, she returned, bringing with her a short, stout,

good-natured man; who was, as I instantly guessed, the real Captain Jones. He bowed civilly, and questioned me closely about the casket. Then he asked Mrs. Aprece, who was in her room when I brought back the box.

"Only her maid Tighe,—but she did not know what the box contained," was the reply.

"She might easily guess," he answered drily. "Ring for her."

Tighe appeared; but declared that she had not noticed that I had anything in my hand, and knew nothing about the casket. She had left Mrs. Aprece to go to her supper, but by that lady's desire a housemaid had sat in the corridor outside her door during that interval, to be within call if Mrs. Aprece needed anything.

"We must send for the police at once," said Captain Jones. "I begin to think it possible that my substitute last night was a most accomplished swindler, and has confederates in the house."

Then he left the room with his Aunt. I was again locked in.

As they had to send to Wrexham for the police, I was alone a good while; but at last the inspector appeared, with Mrs. Aprece and Captain Jones, and I was again most closely questioned. I was told afterwards that Tighe and the housemaid had undergone the same cross-examining, and had not shown the nervous timidity that I did.

The inspector came to the conclusion that the visitor of the night before was a thief; and that he had confederates in the house. He asked me if I had told anyone the errand on which I went to Wrexham. I acknowledged that I had told my mother; and repeated her advice that I should not name it to anyone else.

"The lodging-house people may have been listening," he said, "but that wouldn't account for Captain Jones. It must have been a deep-laid scheme, and proceeded from this household. We must find Captain Jones immediately."

"He said he was going to Mrs. Trevor's," I reminded Mrs. Aprece.

"But, of course he was not," she answered.

"Well," said Captain Jones, "We had better send and see if such a person is there. Don't you think so, inspector?"

"Yes, sir, I do," was the reply, "though I don't expect to find him. We had better send someone who would recognise him, one of your servants, and one of my men. That must be our first step."

And once more I was left alone. But in spite of her trouble and her loss, Mrs. Aprece could not give up the ball.

She had ascertained that the rapid and continued thaw had rendered the roads passable, and she would not lose the introduction to society! Therefore she soon came up to dress, and I heard her lamenting to Tighe that she had lost her best "diamonds," (evidently she did not mean to acknowledge the loss of her rubies) and must wear pearls.

Before she left, she came to my room.

"You will leave this bed-room to-night, Miss Lester," she said coldly, "and at once. Go and sit in the morning-room. Tighe will see that your boxes are taken to another chamber."

"I hope you understand that I shall leave you finally, Mrs. Aprece," I replied.

"Of course; but not for a day or two." And she turned and left me.

I was glad to obey her and go to the morning-room. I understood afterwards from Tighe that after I had gone down, the inspector helped her to search everything I possessed, for the lost casket; and when all my things were moved, the room was searched again. The bed was stripped; and even the walls of the empty closet were sounded to discover if there were a secret entrance, sometimes found in such old houses.

But there was nothing of the kind; and no sign of the casket. The police remained in the house.

I went to my new bed-room at about eleven. It was far from Mrs. Aprece's, I was glad to find; that was a relief, and worn out by anxiety and emotion, I soon fell asleep.

I went down to breakfast next morning very miserable and frightened as to how Mrs. Aprece would treat me, but she was not up; I found only Captain Jones in the breakfast room. He looked very grave and anxious, though he was civil and even kind in his manner.

"Have you heard yet," I asked, as I poured out the tea, "what the police say about Captain Jones?"

"Yes! I fear, in short we are pretty sure, that he was a swindler. The policeman and David (who would have identified him) called at Mrs. Trevor's, and ascertained from the servants that no one had arrived there, nor had they heard that any Captain Jones was expected. Mrs. Trevor, the men informed him, had only one nephew and he was Lord Trevor. They believed that *he* was expected. Thus you see, Miss Lester, your guest of the day before yesterday must have been an impostor, and the inspector feels sure that some of the servants were in league with him and that it has been a planned thing. You were their tool and victim."

I felt as if I, myself, had been proved guilty when I heard this account of my friend of a few hours ago—yet I could not believe it. His frank clear eyes, his honest smile returned to me vividly, and I said again,

"I really think that there is still some mistake. I am sure if you had seen Captain Jones you would believe so."

"Ah! a smooth-spoken handsome fellow, no doubt," he said, drily; "some rascal who has been once a gentleman, probably."

Mrs. Aprece made her appearance in the morning-room, just before luncheon. She looked pale and harassed.

"You have heard," she said, "the confirmation of our suspicions?"

"Yes, and I am very sorry," I answered sincerely.

"Your stupidity has caused the loss," she said gravely, "but I am willing to forgive it on *one* condition. I do not want the loss of the rubies to be known till every effort to recover them has been made. You are aware, and you only, in this neighbourhood, of the consequences following, if I fail to regain them; I shall lose more than half my fortune. I beg you, therefore, to respect the confidence I placed in you about my father's will. You did not mention that to your family I hope?"

"No," I answered, "I only told them that I had to carry back to you some priceless rubies."

"That is well. Be good enough to preserve the secret of that will, and, also, of my loss. Every effort will be made to trace Captain Jones and to

recover the rubies, secretly. When all has failed, we must see what can be done."

"But you understand that I must leave you?" I said, timidly.

"I know you gave me notice, and I was wrong to suspect you. I beg your forgiveness, Mary. Will you remain with me?"

I felt very unwilling to do so, but there were those dear ones in Wrexham to be considered, and one of my troubles during the night and morning had been the certainty that Mrs. Apreece would not give me a recommendation. So I accepted her apology; but I could not—even with the certainty of her renewed favour—reconcile myself to my position. I was in the lowest possible spirits, and could not rouse myself.

Meantime, every effort was made to trace Captain Jones. It was ascertained that the fly he had sent for from the village, had taken him some distance, but had broken down over the rough road. He had liberally compensated the driver—too liberally, the police thought,—and then he had walked on, declining to be delayed. It was ascertained also, that he had directed the driver at first to take him to Wrexham (not to Mrs. Trevor's), and in the direction of Wrexham he had gone.

But he could not be found there, nor be traced from the town. He had completely disappeared.

The servants (under suspicion of the police) were watched by a detective, who was engaged by Captain Jones as a pretended secretary and accountant, but nothing transpired to lead to the discovery of the missing rubies, though Mrs. Apreece still declined to call them lost.

CHAPTER IV.

A SURPRISE.

A month had gone by. One afternoon in February, as I was busy in the avenue gathering some snowdrops from beneath the great trees which edged the drive, I heard a swift, firm step approaching, and looking up, stood transfixed at beholding the sham Captain Edward Jones!

He came smiling up to me, but I held out my hand and cried, "You! you!" in uncontrollable emotion.

"Are you so much astonished?" he said, in his pleasant, frank voice, "did you think I should never come again?"

"But," I said, bewildered, and too agitated to reflect, "They could not find you anywhere! and now you are here!"

He looked surprised.

"Why have they sought for me?" he asked, "and what does your distress mean, dear Miss Lester?"

"Tell me," I said, "tell me truly, for your own sake, are you really Captain Jones? are you really Mrs. Trevor's nephew?"

"I really am Mrs. Trevor's nephew, and I was Captain Edward Jones; I am now Lord Trevor."

"Oh, now I understand," I cried, "Now I understand. They told the policeman her nephew was Lord Trevor."

"The policeman! my dear Miss Lester, pray tell me what all this means? What misfortune has followed our silly mistake?"

His voice was so soothing, so reassuring, that I

told him at once, and frankly, the story of the lost casket, (not, of course, mentioning the rubies and the will), and of the suspicion which had arisen from his disappearance, and the declaration of Mrs. Trevor's servants that she had only one nephew, Lord Trevor.

He laughed merrily.

"What a comedy of errors," he said, "Let me explain that annoyed at your having evidently received a scolding for my mistake, I resolved to depart at earliest dawn. At midnight the thaw commenced as suddenly as the snow had, and in the morning I gave a liberal gratuity to David, my misleader, to get me a fly from the village. He succeeded in doing so, but it was a miserable shatterdan affair, and foreseeing that which really happened to it, I told the man to drive me to Wrexham, intending to take a post chaise on from there to my Aunt's. We broke down as you know, and I walked on; but, unluckily, there was still so much snow on the hills, that I lost my way. I was only going by a spoken direction you know, and I fell over a crag of some height. I broke my leg and lay there in great pain for a time, but a shepherd seeking a lost sheep found me, procured assistance, and I was carried to the hotel in Wrexham, from whence I telegraphed to Aunt Mary. She came immediately; remained till I was well enough to move, and then took me home to her house. I have called now to apologize to Mrs. Apreece for my accidental intrusion."

"Oh! I am so thankful," I said, "So glad! But why did you say 'Yes' when David asked if you were Captain Edward Jones?"

"Because I thought that Aunt Mary had not heard of my accession to the title. I was Captain Jones when she last wrote to me. But this is really a serious affair about the casket. I remember I saw a long narrowish parcel in your hand."

"That was it. But what *can* have become of it then?" I exclaimed.

"As I did not steal it," he laughed, "I really can't tell."

While we talked we had been walking towards the house. Suddenly he paused.

"Perhaps," he said, "I had better go on alone and apologize and explain. Mrs. Apreece will then tell me about her loss, no doubt—that is, if she wishes me to know it; we shall see. I shall not mention that I have seen you."

"Why not?" I asked.

"For a reason of my own," he replied, laughing, "oblige me, Miss Lester, by not saying that I have seen you, unless you are asked."

And he went on alone.

I was not asked if I had met him when I returned to the house about an hour afterwards. Mrs. Apreece greeted me with the exclamation,

"Mary! Captain Edward Jones has been here, and who do you think he is?"

"Who?" I asked, looking as unconscious as I could, but feeling deceitful.

"Why Lord Trevor! He has explained everything, and has called to apologize; and he declares that he thinks the casket is only mislaid and may turn up any day. He has begged me to let him come and stay here for a few days, as he says he has a gift of finding out things."

"Then you told him of the loss of the casket?" I said.

"Yes; of the loss of my *diamonds*, you know."

"And shall you let him come here?" I asked, my heart giving a sudden bound.

"Yes, of course; and he means to bring Mrs. Trevor to call. I am delighted to know them. You were quite right, Mary, in saying that he was a gentleman."

Lord Trevor came the next day, and Mrs. Apreece invited several of the county people to stay also, to meet him. Of course, though I saw him daily, I had very little conversation with him. He was engrossed by others, and could not give much attention to the poor companion.

One day Mrs. Apreece said to me—

"Lord Trevor does not seem able to keep his promise. He had an interview with the inspector this morning, and he tells me that the police declare the case to be most puzzling—more so than ever. Not a word can be said by anyone against the character of any of the servants. David, it seems, is rather a model youth; and since Captain Jones has proved to be Lord Trevor, they declare that they have no clue at all, and are hopeless of finding any. If you had not shown me the casket, Mary, I should have thought you had never brought it into the house."

"I hope you do not still think me capable of robbing you, Mrs. Apreece," I said, haughtily (for me).

"No," she said, "I am certain that you would not; and so I told the inspector this morning. Indeed Lord Trevor was quite indignant when he (the inspector) said no one could know where the box was but Miss Lester."

"So that he thinks still that I am a thief," I said bitterly. "I wish that I had never consented to fetch the casket."

The knowledge that the police still suspected me, and that Lord Trevor knew that a slur rested on me, greatly distressed me. I was nervous, and miserably excited all day; the more so that I felt Lord Trevor's eyes were often on me scrutinizingly,—surely he could not have yielded to so degrading a suspicion of me?

I went to bed a very wretched girl; and lay long thinking over the unfortunate affair in which I had been so strangely mixed up.

Where was that wretched casket?

With this thought in my mind, I fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

LORD TREVOR'S STORY.

MISS LESTER has requested me to continue her tale, and to relate how the puzzle for the police was solved; and I am glad to obey her, as I am rather proud of my skill in detecting the truth in this instance; and feel convinced that should an hereditary peerage ever be abolished, I have shown in this case a capacity for delicate investigation which may entitle me to a place in the force.

Now let me say that on the evening when I was an unconscious intruder on Mrs. Apreece, I was much struck by the peculiar and rather singular beauty of her companion. The extraordinary clearness and purity of her complexion, the large, frightened-looking blue eyes, the sweet pathetic mouth greatly touched me. And the eyes had such a strange dreamy look, at times as if she

scarcely saw me, though she was listening intently. I thought as I looked at her that she was just the kind of sensitive, dreamy, imaginative girl that mesmerists find good *clairvoyantes*, and this suggested telling her (as I did) all about the strange magic of the east, the long trances of the fakirs, &c. I often thought of that sweet face as I lay on my couch, whilst my broken leg healed. And as soon as I was well enough, I started for Plas Gwenn to call on Mrs. Apreece, apologize for my unconscious intrusion on her hospitality, and see the blue eyed fairy again.

As I rode up to the lodge gates I saw Miss Lester gathering snowdrops, and dismounting, I gave the groom my horse to lead, and walked in, in order that I might speak to her a little longer than I could if I were riding.

Her extreme surprise at seeing me, led to her telling me the story she has now written—more briefly of course; but I saw through it, how shamefully she had been treated, and how sadly she felt the humiliating suspicions of Mrs. Apreece.

I saw the latter lady alone shortly afterwards, and succeeded before I left her, in persuading her that I was a clever, heaven-born detective, and that if she would invite me to stay, I might succeed in solving the puzzle. (My real motive was a wish to be near and to study a little, her remarkable companion). The lady was only too glad to have me: she loved a nobleman and was eager for the best society. But she spoke with great contempt of Miss Lester.

"She is almost an idiot, I think," she declared, "if she had not been so stupid I really should have thought she had succeeded in making off with the casket herself."

This was her opinion of a girl who was better read, and had more fancy and imagination than any woman whom I had yet seen!

I saw the inspector of police at once, and was indignant when he declared that he believed Miss Lester knew where the jewels were. I remonstrated with him on the absurdity of imagining this young lady guilty of so base a crime.

"Well, my lord," he said, doggedly, "ladies are guilty of base crimes sometimes as well as other people. Since your lordship proves to have been Captain Jones, I don't see that there is any one to suspect but Miss Lester. None of the servants knew what the box contained; and besides they all seem thoroughly honest people. I ask you who could get at the jewels, without that young lady's knowledge."

And certainly, as he recapitulated the facts to me, it did seem a puzzling case.

It was soon, however, to be solved.

During my two or three days' residence at Plas Gwenn, I had kept a sharp watch on its inhabitants of all classes that came within my view both night and day. With my attention thus awake, I noticed one day that Miss Lester was unusually agitated and depressed. What had caused it?

The thought occupied me till late into the night, then just as I was preparing to undress, I heard a movement outside my door, and a light step passed it. I softly opened it and peeped out.

A slight figure all in white, with floating golden hair, and lump in hand, was going down the corridor, which led to a room believed to be haunted.

I knew this because it had been pointed out to

me and I had offered to sleep in it. Why should any one go there at two in the morning? Was it the supposed ghost?

A suspicion I had always cherished since I had heard Miss Lester's story, induced me to follow the appearance and ascertain. So I walked softly after it into the empty chamber.

On opening the door I saw her—it was Mary Lester herself—drawing a chair towards a high, old-fashioned bureau, which stood at the end of the room. I remained still and watched her. She mounted on the chair, with her pretty white uncovered feet, reached up to the top of the bureau (which was shut in by a carved ornamental cornice) and felt about carefully; then with a sigh she stepped down, took her lamp up and came towards the door. I moved aside, but she did not see me. Her great blue eyes were open, but solemnly fixed and sightless. Her rich golden hair swept round her nearly to the ground. She was beautiful, but awful to look on. She walked on, or rather glided like a spirit; I followed her, out of the corridor, and up some steps; down another passage, and then saw her enter and close the door, of what was, no doubt, her bedroom. Then knowing that she was safe, I returned to the haunted room; stepped upon the chair and drew from behind the carved cornice a long, narrowish box, the form of which I recognized immediately. It was the lost casket.

The next morning I saw Mrs. Apreece before breakfast, told her my story, and delivered the casket into her hands. Then she told me of what vital importance its possession was to her.

We consulted as to what we should do about explaining the facts to Miss Lester, without too much distressing or alarming her. I begged to be allowed to do it myself, and I prepared Mary for it, by first telling her that I loved her, and would fain have her for my wife.

And the sweet little creature owned that she had loved me from the first, and had never believed that I could be anything but good.

"But, Lord Trevor," she said, suddenly remembering, "I cannot marry you with a doubt or suspicion hanging about myself. We must first find the casket."

"Mary," I said solemnly, "I mean to marry you, although it is already proved that you are the thief."

She stared at me in horror. Then I put my arm around her and told her all.

"I suspected from the first, dearest," I said, "that it was a case of somnambulism, and I asked to stay here, that I might watch you. I could not bear that anyone else should follow you in your sleep, and perhaps wake you; and I have succeeded. Mrs. Apreece has her rubies."

To describe Mary's delight and gratitude would be impossible, but she was greatly startled at the idea of being a sleep-walker. I consoled her by explaining that it was her overwrought frame of mind, and her great, intense fear and anxiety that had caused it, and assured her that she need fear no repetition of it.

I have proved a true prophet. Mary Lester has been Lady Trevor for six months now, and has given no sign of an inclination for somnambulism.

She was married from Plas Gwenn, and Mrs. Apreece, who gave a ball in the evening, displayed to the admiring public on that occasion her won-

derful rubies—though Mary and I have strongly recommended her to give them up, and be thus freed from risk and anxiety.

IN BAD HANDS.

A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON,

Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Lazarus in London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IV.

PHIL ACTS FOR HIMSELF.

PHIL WHARTON shrank for an instant beneath the heavy hand of his parent, and then recovered himself and looked his father steadily in the face.

"I can't leave aunt," he said.

"We shall see about that," Mr. Wharton answered; "you go and sit down there whilst I talk to your aunt a little while. And you needn't listen more than you can help. I hate listeners. They're dirty sneaks."

"Phil need not stay at all," murmured Mrs. Wharton.

"Oh, yes, he need," was the flat contradiction proffered by her brother. "Do you think I have taken all this trouble to find my only child—the long lost son, feloniously abstracted from my house and 'home,'—to have him slip away again. Thank you, Bella dear, but I'll keep him in sight, please."

Phil sat down by the window—which was still open that hot summer night—and looked into the street below. He was very pale, but very grave and self-possessed. It was impossible to guess what thoughts were troubling him, or distressing him, by a glance at his quiet, little face. They were shutting up some of the shops in the Marsh Walk now; all the drapers and all the "fancy goods" depôts for wooden dolls, tin soldiers and detonating balls were closed, the greengrocer's, the hot-baked sheeps' heads emporium, the cheesemonger's next door, and the oil shop, were still expectant of customers, though they had lowered their gas to half-cock; the tobacconist over the way was actually busy with three youths, the tallest having resolved to try one of "Brown's famous penny smokes," and his two companions having accompanied him to superintend the purchase and make sure Mr. Brown picked out a nice and mild one; and the Jolly Gardeners was a blaze of light and life, with two performers, with violin and piccolo, playing at the jug and bottle entrance, the piccolo with his left eye riveted on the landlord behind the distant counter. There were some drops of rain pattering into the street, and covering the pavement with black spots, and the policeman across the road was telling the master butcher next to Brown's that it would be a wet night, and very good for the country; if not for him upon his beat. Phil could hear the words, and he wondered what kind of night it would be for him now, and how it would end, with Foxy Wharton glowering at him there, and his aunt endeavouring to look calm and undismayed, and hold her ground against her brother.

Mr. Wharton had taken a seat and was leaning a little forwards in the chair making his intentions as plain as possible to his sister, and emphasising his discourse by various slaps upon the table with his brown, hard hand. He had been always, even in his best days, a noisy braggart, Mrs. Wharton was aware, and therefore his manner was not new to her, and did not in any way surprise her. She remembered it too well—she, and the poor wife who had died young, and got away from him, had grown very used to it once upon a time. And here was the grim, dark time back again, as it were, and these three faces to face again without any friendly greeting, any token of the strong tie of kindred existent between them, any loving looks or fair-spoken words. Nothing but fear and distrust, and a wonder in the woman's mind, as in the boy's, as to what would come of it all.

The man was endeavouring to make that clear enough to them; but his listeners were not disposed to agree with him, only to speculate already as to what would be the result of opposition to his wishes, even to the extent of a direct defiance of them.

He spoke of the law, and laid before them the law's opinion, which they did not believe. He had been all his life too lawless himself to impress them very much in that way—hence his legal knowledge, his exhibition of virtuous indignation, might, under less serious circumstances to them, have bordered on burlesque. But now in their hearts they were simply afraid of him. They had run away in fear of him some years ago, and the fear had grown no less. That night had even added to its strength. This was a crisis in their career which they thought might come some day, although the man had never cared for them, and might possibly have been very glad to get rid of them for what they knew to the contrary. Why should he want to see them?—they had been a clog upon him always, and he had always looked upon them as very much in his way, and told them so, and swore at them for the encumbrances they were. They had not credited him with any paternal instincts, and yet, after all, there he was before them asserting his rights to be considered the lawful guardian of his son.

"What use would he be to you?" inquired Mrs. Wharton at last.

"Never mind what use. That's my business," replied her brother; "and it's high time I looked after him, and saw his education was not being neglected. How do I know in what way the boy has been dragged up?"

"He has been well looked after," was the slow reply. "He will make a better man, Foxy, than you have ever been."

"I don't want any sauce," Mr. Wharton replied. "You always had a nasty, biting tongue of your own, and that's what got you so generally disliked. And I'll thank you not to call me 'Foxy'; it's a vulgar nickname, which I repudiate."

"You were rather proud of it once, I used to think."

"Pity you hadn't something better to think about," said her brother; "to think, for instance, how that dear boy is going to get on in the world after you are gone—and you don't look as if you'd last the blessed week out—or of how you reconcile

your canting talk with running away with my property. What have you done with that?"

"It was Mary's own property. It belonged to her mother. It has been used to keep Phil alive. Mary gave it me, when she begged me to escape with Phil, at any risk and cost, to get away from you."

"It's all very well to tell me that. It's a poor excuse, and I don't believe a word of it," he said.

"It's the truth."

"It's a clear case of kidnapping and wholesale felony. What do you think the police would say to the whole business?" he inquired.

"Call in the police and ask them."

"Sha'n't. I'm not so fond of them. I can manage my own business, thank you. So, Phil" (in a loud voice), "get on your cap, and come with me."

"Where?" asked Phil, quietly.

"Never you mind where," roared the man; "that you'll find out in good time. I'm your father, and there's no one here dare stop me—no one to prove he has the faintest right to stop me; so come on."

"And aunt, who has been very good and kind to me since mother died—who has been so like my mother to me?" murmured the boy.

"Confound your aunt!" he exclaimed. "I'll have nothing to do with her; and I'll train you up to hate her presently."

"Oh, no, you won't."

"What's that you say?"

"You can't do that, father; that's not in your power."

Mr. Wharton looked hard at the boy, whose pale face was set and resolute, and whose grey eyes did not flinch from the fierce light they met in his. He wavered, and then changed front. "I mean," he said, "when you know all the truth, which she's kept from you, boy. When you and Iara in the country together, living like lords or fighting cocks, and happy as the day is long, with no work to do, and yet the money coming in, nice and regular, Phil, and only the two of us to spend it. When——"

"I can't go with you."

"But you must go."

"I can't trust you again. I'm afraid of you, as—as mother was," said Phil. "I recollect what you were before we ran away. I can't forget all that."

"Here, I've stood enough of this!" he shouted.

What were Mr. Wharton's intentions were not very clearly manifested, although he had sprung to his feet as if with the object of carrying off his son by sheer force of arms—not so difficult a task, perhaps, considering those with whom he had to contend, and "the rights" which were on his side. He could not go to law, perhaps, for the recovery of his child, but there was no one to go to law with him—no one to whom this mighty, sluggish law would listen, if Phil were once in his possession.

Bella Wharton saw this, and the boy's instincts were keen enough to second her. In his father's power he was surely helpless. Foxy Wharton had been so terrible a sire—so irredeemably bad and callous and unjust—and life with him again was to live the life of the lost. Woman and child had

striven hard to get away from him, and this was too miserable an end to all their efforts.

Phil seemed to have only one chance of settling the question that night, and that was to get away as speedily and swiftly as it had been done before. At all events it would postpone the question for that evening, and save further disputes and much violence of language. Phil stepped suddenly out of the window, amongst the flower-pots, and went lightly along the narrow ledge of shops to Hickman's the cheesemonger's next door, where there was a shop-blind still running out across the street, and an iron bar thereto to support it, festooned by Ostend rabbits. The instant afterwards Phil Wharton was dangling amongst the rabbits, and the instant after that he had dropped to the ground, bringing down a rabbit or two with him, frightening the man in charge, and scaring Mr. Broadbrook almost out of his life, and just as he was gingerly putting up the last shutter of his establishment.

"Bless my soul and body, what's the matter now," exclaimed the hairdresser, as he slipped down, shutter and all, on the wet pavement in his consternation.

"Don't say which way I've gone. Be good to aunt, please," cried Phil, as he took to his heels—and a very light pair of heels too—along the middle of the Marsh Walk, sending up a little fountain of mud over himself as he ran. Mr. Broadbrook gathered up himself and his shutter and looked vacantly after Phil's retreating figure till he was once more swung round by an opposing force in the huge shape of Mr. Wharton, who came tumbling out of the shop and upon him.

"Which way has he gone," he cried out.

"Which—way—has—who gone?" asked the barber, staggering about with his shutter very helplessly.

Foxy Wharton did not stop to explain. In the distance he could see Phil running swiftly along, and he set up a whoop of "Stop thief," which roused the echoes of the street, and enlisted attention and auxiliary forces at once.

"Stop thief," set all Marsh Walk alive. It always did. The place was a common hunting-ground for the vagrant and the desperate, and though this was a cry patent to the neighbourhood, it always aroused interest and excitement and "fun." Mr. Broadbrook put up his remaining shutter and then joined in the race on his own account, and in the hope of being of some service should Phil be overtaken, and the cheesemonger's young man followed with alacrity, believing that he was a rabbit short, and not stopping to count his stock in hand in the eagerness of pursuit.

But when Foxy Wharton and his band of volunteers, and the hairdresser, and the cheesemonger's young man, had turned the corner of the street down which Phil had plunged, there was no sign of the youth who had taken flight, and all was damp, and dark and desolate in James Street. Conscious of this fact, after a while, Mr. Broadbrook went speedily homewards, before Mr. Wharton had recognized him, and bolted and barred up his premises for the night with an extra degree of precaution.

He would sit up for Phil, nevertheless, being sure that he should see him later on, and hear him knock quietly at the door for re-admittance, which would be granted after a few inquiries through the

key-hole, and the making sure that it was not Foxy Wharton who had returned. He went up stairs along with his better half, to talk it over with the aunt, who had "quieted down," she said, and was very glad that Phil had got away,—and very sure, like Mr. Broadbrook, that Phil would quickly be back again.

"I shall see him soon, and then we will talk over what is best to do," she said.

But she never saw Phil Wharton again, and there was no talking it over in this world for her.

CHAPTER V.

FALSE SECURITY.

THE next day there came a letter to Mrs. Wharton, care of Mr. Broadbrook, hairdresser, 729, Marsh Walk, and the letter was from her nephew Phil, and ran as follows:—

*"Hercules Buildings,
"Lambeth."*

"MY DEAR AUNT,

"I got away stunning! But it was not till I was clear off that I found out I had twisted my ankle dropping from old Hickman's blind. Tell him I am very sorry, and hope the rabbits did not get much damaged, and if they did, I will pay for them someday. I fancy you gave me the office (*tipped me the wink*)—the boy had written in true boyish slang, and then had crossed it out again, at the suggestion of a friend to whom he had shown the letter before despatching it), to get away; and it was jolly easy to slip out of the window and drop into the street. I am afraid I dropped upon Mr. Broadbrook, as he was shutting up the shop; but I don't remember anything, except seeing him sitting upon the wet pavement, with the shutter in his lap. My love to him, and I hope he isn't hurt. I am quite safe with Mr. Miles the organist, who is going to keep me in his house, and out of the way, until my ankle is better, and I can get about again. He is a regular good one (*brick* had been erased, and good one substituted), and won't let me move off the sofa; and hopes you will not fret about my being absent, or let father worry you again, if you can help it. You will do as well as you can without me, and keep nice and cheerful. I hope to get to church next Sunday. Mr. Miles thinks it would not be safe for you to come round to me, as father may be watching the shop in Marsh Walk, and follow you. I miss you very much. My best love, and please feed my silkworms, which you will find inside my Sunday cap, and I should like my prayer-book and hymn-book sent by post, and don't worry about me, and get well soon, and God bless you Auntie, and with love to you, and all the Broadbrooks,

"Your affectionate Nephew,

"PHILIP WHARTON."

"That's a good boy, to think of all those who are anxious about him," said Mr. Broadbrook, to whom the letter was slowly and gravely read by Mrs. Wharton; "I'm very glad he's written."

"You will not let my brother know where Phil is, if he should call again?" said the old lady.

"Madam, I would rather walter in my own gore, in my own shop, slain by his own hand," answered the brave Broadbrook.

"Yes, it would be better," remarked Mrs. Wharton, absently. "Thank you—you are very kind."

But there was nothing seen of Foxy Wharton in Marsh Walk, and the opportunity to defy that gentleman was not offered to Mr. Broadbrook. Still, the house was watched, and a very thin, shabby, collarless man, deeply pitted with small pox, took an interest in the wares displayed in the shop window, and gazed at them admiringly half an hour at a time, despite the stock consisting only of empty pomatum pots, a few combs and brushes damaged by the sun and the flies, and seven bottles of "Broadbrook's Threepenny Rose-Oil for the Nursery," a bright crimson fluid which the nurseries of Marsh Walk sternly refused to patronize, although there was nearly half a pint for threepence, and the colour was absolutely dazzling.

This thin man of shabby exterior, "with a face like a cribbage board," as Mr. Broadbrook described it afterwards, was evidently keeping an eye upon the premises, and was not to be frowned away by the proprietor. When tired with gazing in the window, he would take up his position by the lamp-post, where Mr. Wharton had once stood, or hang around the doors of the Jolly Gardeners, dropping in occasionally, like a man with drink money to spare, and very often thirsty. Mr. Broadbrook took counsel of a policeman, who did not see what was to be done, and recommended Mr. Broadbrook's applying to the police station in the Lane, where the hairdresser was snubbed by the inspector and told to mind his own business, and to wait at least till something illegal *had* happened before he began harassing the authorities with his cock and a bull stories. As for the father, why, he *was* the boy's father, and nobody denied it, and there was nothing to be said against him that anybody could prove, and Mr. Broadbrook and his female lodger had better be careful they did not get themselves into trouble presently for keeping the boy away from his lawful guardian. Just what Foxy Wharton had said—and said with emphasis; and Mr. Broadbrook returned to his shop in Marsh Walk in a desolate frame of mind, and with a dim prospect of standing in the dock by the side of Mrs. Wharton to answer to a charge of kidnapping.

But the lawful guardian did not claim the assistance of the law. The name of Wharton was unknown to the police, but there were several aliases by which he had been known, and might be still inquired for, and it was as well to manage matters his own way. And his own way was to take possession of his son, and bring him up to be a comfort, and a source of profit to him.

And we may say at once that he was perfectly aware what had become of Phil, and with whom he was staying. He had not followed Phil Wharton from the church of St. Eustace, Westminster, to his home in Marsh Walk, for nothing; he had seen his son in company with the organist, and noticed him shake hands with him at the door of his lodgings; and it was Folkestone Miles to whom his suspicions were first directed, when it was discovered that the choir boy did not return to his Aunt Bella.

The nets were closing round this little stray though he was unaware of it, and Folkestone Mills, as well as himself, was buoyed up by false security.

"It is all right, I think," the organist said on the Sunday morning, when it was very much all wrong, and Phil was able to limp, if a little slowly, across Westminster Bridge to the Church of St. Eustace and sing his very best there. In the evening Mr. Miles, always thoughtful and considerate, and warm hearted, treated him to an omnibus ride to Westminster, and thought, he said laughingly, that it would "run to it" on the homeward route again, and Phil's heart warmed to the young man as towards an elder brother, and life would have been pleasant and happy with him, had it not been for the thoughts of his aunt, patient and hopeful, and always waiting for him in the upstairs room at Broadbrook's.

"The house is watched—you must not come home yet" she had written to say, forgetting, or rather not guessing that Mr. Miles's house was watched as well, by men determined to have this singing bird, and seeing the way to make it worth their while. Had Foxy Wharton been captain of the forty thieves he could not have been served more faithfully by the subordinates about him, and two of them were even inside St. Eustace's itself next Sunday evening, outwardly devout, and inwardly watching and plotting for the boy's capture. They sat in the free seats, and listened to his singing, clear and bell-like, and of surprising power; they nudged each other craftily as they noted the effect upon many of the congregation to whom the choir of St. Eustace was the principal attraction, and prayers and sermon only a secondary consideration, if even of any consideration at all; they crept out of the church before the service was quite finished and lay in ambush outside, in the shadows of the vestry, trusting for the chance which might present itself, and for which they had planned. For which they had prayed too—understandingsuch prayersas that, and knowing nothing of the earnest supplications they had listened to in church that night, making neither head nor tail of them.

It was by cruel chance that the vicar of St. Eustace called Mr. Folkestone Miles back into the vestry that evening, when the choir had gone its various ways, and Phil was about leaving with his friend.

"I will not keep you a minute, Mr. Miles," said the vicar bluntly, and Mr. Miles nodding to Phil, and implying by that nod that he was to wait for him outside, passed into the vestry with the clergyman, and Philip went on recking not of danger by the way.

The vicar was not quite as good as his word, and the minute became two, three, five, lengthened even to ten before all had been explained about a special service which was due on Friday next. When Folkestone Miles was in the open air at last it was lightning vividly, and through his violet glasses he could see no sign of the chorister. Phil had grown tired of waiting, he thought, and had gone slowly in the direction of Hercules Buildings, unmindful of the ride homewards that had been promised, and Folkestone Miles stepped out confident of overtaking him before the Houses of Parliament were reached.

But he failed to come up with him, or his weak

sight had not stood him in good stead, or he had passed him, or the lightning, which was very blue and vivid, had confused him on his way. He was not nervous about Phil, even when he found that he had reached home before the boy; he was a sharp walker, and of course had passed Phil, who was very lame just then—it was only half an hour afterwards, three quarters, and then an hour, that there came to his slow mind the suspicion of foul play:

(To be continued.)

THE VANISHED VISIONS.

BY J. COULSON KERNAHAN.

A POET sat in his room apart,
Dull, despondent, and sad at heart.
As a lonely boy in his sunset dreams
Strange thoughts had haunted him: meteor-gleams
Athwart the void of his soul revealed,
In glimpse elusive, a world concealed
In clouded glory. Anon there fell
On his raptured spirit the far-off swell
Of soaring symphonies, sad and sweet,
As Eolian sighing: its music thrilled
His inmost being, yet sank and stilled
E'en as he listened. On pinion fleet,
An Angel-Soul from the Mercy Seat,
Perchance in passing his harp had rilled—
So he loved to think.

There were days that rose
In cloudless splendour: the bosom broad
Of the bare, brown earth was no lifeless sod,
But a living spirit. From hushed repose,
The zephyrs woke to their frolics wild,
The waters laughed, and the flow'rets smiled;
And the golden sunshine that dancing lit
O'er cheek and forehead was music-filled,
As the air with the song of birds: it thrilled
To the poet's being. A light would flit
Athwart the sky of his soul: he saw
A far-off glory—then thought upswelled
In deep-voiced grandeur, that silent held
His tranced spirit in breathless awe.

But now he sat in his room apart,
Mute, despondent, and sad at heart,
For his thoughts were dull as a lowering sky,
When upheaped storm-clouds bulging lie
O'er mead and meadow. Beheld within
Was no vision fair, but a wide, waste sweep
Of barren desert; lethargic sleep
Enchained his spirit, though wild chagrin
Upbraiding tore him. At last he said:
"This stifling city, this throttling din
Lies on my heart like a load of lead!"
Then he lingered long where the wild sea-swell
Landward swooped till its surges fell,
Dashed and shattered, in cloudy spray,
That, swirling, hissing, was swept away
In a wild rebound—but no throbbing came
To his deadened spirit, no kindling flame
In his mind awoke. Then away he sped
Where lakes of sapphire, o'ersilvered, spread
Clear and cool 'neath an azure sky.

Hill-framed and guarded. Like spectres bright,
Clad and sheeted in snowy white,

Shone cloud-zoned mountains—yet cold and dry
Were his heart and brain. Then at last he said:
"I will seek no more. Though my hopes are dead,
Yet I still may work, and my toil shall shed
O'er laden bosom, and care-bowed head
Some rest and peace. Though my words may
break

No captive's fetters, no soul awake
To Truth and Beauty—these hands of mine
Shall gain a conquest, if less divine,
Yet not ignoble." Then forth he went,
Nor paused, nor murmured, but silent bent
To his lonely task.

So the long months sped
In toil incessant. At last upswelled
In his soul such music as erst had held
His tranced spirit, nor passing fled,
As in days gone by; and within arose
His long-lost visions, but fairer far
Than the dreams of boyhood. Then as a star
Softly slumb'ring in sunset skies,
Clearer glistens, and brighter glows
To lambent crystal at twilight-close—
So his thoughts outshone, and in awed surprise,
The great world listened with gleaming eyes.

NIGHT-CAPS AND WARMING-PANS.

BY LEOPOLD WAGNER.

THAT the present choice of title for his essay indicates a somewhat sleepy subject, the author is full well aware. Indeed, he has set to himself the agreeable task of descanting for a while upon the customs relative to the apparently matter-of-fact business of "going to bed," in various parts of the world, and at different periods of its history. And a very matter-of-fact operation going to bed undoubtedly is, according to European notions, at least. Certainly, few of the habits of common life would appear to be easier than, when worn out after the day's exertion, to throw off one's attire, and step at once into the welcome bed, in which, during a set number of hours, sweet and refreshing slumber is to be courted in anticipation of the labours of the coming day.

But what shall we say to the elaborate preparations that are necessary before going to bed in many foreign lands?—in India, for instance, where the natives, in order to protect themselves against the attacks of the mosquitoes, smear themselves all over with oil; whilst others, in more dangerously infested localities, are compelled to cover their bodies with sand three or four inches in thickness, the head alone being left bare, with a napkin hiding the face!

European residents in that country do not always fare so badly, as they are generally provided with a proper mosquito-curtain, composed of green gauze, and drawn tightly round the body. Yet even they are compelled at times to sleep near a large fire to ward off these dreaded pests. In the tropics, the natives, though for the most part perfectly naked during the day, envelop themselves in heaps of clothing by night, while sleeping in rude habitations erected upon piles, beneath which a roaring fire is kept up; nor can the fire be at all dispensed with, save

when the hut is built in the middle of a stream or on the sea-shore.

Throughout the East, sleeping in the open air is the common practice. The Persians, Turks, and the Orientals generally, indulge their nightly rest beneath the large canvas awnings in front of their windows, the cool of the air being greatly preferred to the luxurious lounges that are ranged round the interior of their apartments. The Jews, in Palestine, improve upon this, by sleeping on the roofs of their houses, which are perfectly flat. A substantial parapet encloses this improvised bed-chamber, and hither the mattress and necessary coverings are deposited for the accommodation of the sleeper. The poorer Jews content themselves with sleeping on the ground, protected only from the chills of night by their mantle or ordinary day-garment, drawn more closely around them; which custom remains exactly as it existed during the Biblical era.

Among the Hindoos, and to some extent, the Malays, the mode of going to bed is extremely facile; the bed itself is even carried from place to place. This consists of no more than a narrow strip of matting, upon which the sleeper deposits himself, protected only by his usual attire, with his head resting upon a pillow of bamboo-work. In the morning he merely rolls his matting round the pillow, and carries it under his arm to a place of safety, in readiness for his next night's accommodation. The Japanese also sleep upon a mat, but within doors. This mat is likewise stretched upon the floor, and a pillow, composed of a solid block of wood, supplied; while, as to covering, a cotton-stuffed quilt, in close resemblance of a Japanese dress, and with capacious sleeves, forms an improvement upon the usual scant bed-furniture of the East. But, for all this, European travellers have many times expressed their horror of the Japanese bedding, sufficient testimony of which is found in the fact that the sleeves peculiar to their quilt, invariably harbour swarms of the most voracious fleas; nor is it possible for one unaccustomed to such pests, to court the delights of peaceful slumber for five minutes together.

In one respect the Orientals observe a universal rule—they never undress to go to bed. A single, and extremely curious exception, might be, however, dwelt upon in this place. We allude to the Abyssinians, who can scarcely be said to go to bed at all, their custom being in reality to sleep in their mantle, commonly termed a *quarry*. Previous to retiring, this quarry is closely drawn around them, so as to hide the actions from view, when, quick as lightning, the seemingly impossible feat of divesting themselves of their particularly tight-fitting trousers and close upper clothing is accomplished, after which they throw themselves upon the ground to sleep inside the quarry, without so much as exposing the head, until the morning. Married couples make their preparations even in a more singular fashion. In such cases the quarry of the husband suffices for the two, not only through the night, but for the purpose of concealment whilst undressing. It should be mentioned perhaps, in explanation, that the Abyssinian quarry, of white cotton, with a red border, is usually seven feet six inches long by nine feet in width—a size which places European blankets and bed-coverings at a considerable discount.

It is perhaps quite as well, in the interests of mortality, that the inhabitants of Western civilization do not overburden themselves with their ordinary day-clothing during the hours of sleep. Take the Germans, the Dutch, and the Danes, for example, who would be literally smothered to death beneath the huge sack-like feather-beds which they pile upon their bodies. These beds are known in England as “sider-down quilts,” and most unhealthy luxuries they prove to be where the sleeper has not by long habit accustomed himself to the debilitating effects of the excessive perspiration that is evolved from the system during the night. Another no less satisfactory mode of going to bed, exists among the Icelanders, the Lapps, and the Esquimaux; but this is due rather to the extreme rigour of the climate, than the foibles of the people. In the case of these, the return home to go to bed for the night, resembles very much a rabbit seeking its hole in the ground. The would-be sleeper actually burrows deep in the snow to find the entrance to his hut, which is at the same time the sole exit for the smoke and unwholesome air emitted by its many occupants. Once within, he stretches himself, dressed as he is, beside the blazing fire to sleep and snore to his heart's content until the dawn, by which time he and his companions must be tolerably well “smoked” from the combined effects of the air-tight enclosure in which they have so long confined themselves.

The modern delights of going to bed, on the other hand, are perhaps more than anywhere else experienced in Russia, where specially-appointed domestics are kept to read the head of the family to sleep. The title of this privileged attendant is the *burtheyn*, corresponding to the old British chamberlain. In many of our old mansions, where the bedchambers have not been permanently disturbed, a trundle-bed, in addition to the old-fashioned four-poster, will be found. It was here that the chamberlain rested (hence his name) when he had recourse to music, reading, or conversation for his lord's special benefit. Our ancestors, too, had their *wine of repose* served to them after stepping into bed. This was a more moderate observance of the old Saxon and Norman *carousal* that was always indulged in the hall upon the heels of the last substantial meal, previous to retiring for the night. A medium between these past practices is even in vogue by many individuals in our own time, who, belonging to the old-fashioned order, as they do, and hence their excuse, insist upon taking a *night-cap* before going to bed. Long prayers were always said previous to retiring, principally in verse; the last words spoken by the sleeper were always framed in this couplet—

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,
The bed be blest that I lye on!

—and which continued in use almost down to the time of our grandfathers.

Apropos of the twofold arrangement of the bed-chamber, it may be interesting to many to learn that a Jewish household, even of the poorest order, always counts a double bed for the married couple, and in the same chamber also a single bed, to be used by the wife occasionally. Yet, however natural the dictata of such a law may be, it is observed only by the Jews, who recognize it as one

of the oldest and most sacred of their race. In another regard, the usages of society in France demand separate bedchambers for man and wife; and in this it differs materially from the eminently domesticated habits of the English people. The Greeks and Romans had, like the Jews, two distinct beds in their apartments. The one was the day-bed, and the other used for sleeping upon at night. The day-bed was also a lazy fashion all through the Middle Ages, even as late as Shakespeare's time; and though it is not now universally fashionable, the nineteenth-century habit of taking *forty winks* after dinner, may be directly traced to it.

Allusion has been made to the Orientals, who never disrobe themselves when going to bed. Such a custom would doubtless be deemed sufficiently shocking in the minds of Western civilization, but what would be the opinion of society were a few amongst us suddenly to go to the other extreme! It is a fact that the Romans, and, during a long period, our English ancestors of both sexes, slept without any clothing on whatever. True, the Saxons wore a night or chamber-gown, called the *nicktes rægel*, and sometimes another of a peculiar kind, the *blachentum*, or more properly a blanket-gown of wool, worn in place of the day-shirt during sleep. The Normans introduced a specially-made night-shirt similar to that worn by ourselves, though distinguished by far more fanciful embroidery than durable material. But after Stephen, or at any rate, after Henry I., these fell into disuse, and each and every authority upon such periods of our history, contend that up to the reign of Henry VIII. both sexes slept entirely nude. This seeming indelicacy was also rendered more apparent by the fact, that while the body was thus exposed the head was always covered—at first with a napkin or handkerchief, and afterwards by a night-cap. This reminds one very much of the account of the savages who were discovered wearing hats upon their heads, but otherwise going about quite naked! Yet the idea of covering the head during sleep has existed from the very earliest times. Capitolinus himself speaks of the Roman Antonine, who, in order to court sleep, covered his head; and from that time down, through the Middle Ages at least, substitutes for *night-caps* were always in request. But it must not be supposed that the custom was adopted out of any particular sense, either of mock propriety or health. It was merely a feminine caprice to preserve their head-dress from disturbance during the night; so that here again we find the finger of fashion pointing out a new departure, which, ere long, was destined to become an institution with even both sexes. The *night-caps* of the Tudor and Stuart periods were, however, very different from those which formerly distinguished our century. Then they were made of the finest silk and velvet, extravagantly formed, and in various colours, which obviated the necessity of frequent washing, since—reluctant as we are to admit it—our ancestors were no particular lovers of cleanliness.

From *night-caps* to *warming-pans* is an easy transition, though somewhat extreme in its relation to the human body. The adage which has it, "Keep the head cool and the feet warm," must formerly have been subject to considerable latitude and perversion, since it was usual to warm

both ends of the system at the same time. Doubtless the idea of this was to promote an equal balance throughout, just as would be effected from a similar application to the extremities of the mercurial tube of a barometer. A species of warming-pan was certainly known to the Anglo-Saxons, as we are told that Robert, Duke of Normandy, was *blinded* with one. What might have been the shape of this weapon must, however, be left to the imagination. Its construction once more forms a subject for comment when we follow the Chronicles of Froissart, who in one place, speaks of an old man that had his bed well warmed with *heated air* to make him perspire; yet, by some means or other, the *flame* set fire to the sheets, and caused his death! Such a catastrophe must have been most alarming, and sufficiently indicative of the truth that "coals of fire" are scarcely safe bed-fellows. Coming down to more modern times, we entirely fail to discover who invented our old-fashioned warming-pan, which is rapidly becoming extinct, to be replaced by the more ingenious hot-water bottles and cans that are so delightful at the bed-foot on a bitter winter's night. A curious, yet very acceptable home-made warming-pan arrangement, is traceable in the rural parts of Germany. During the autumn, when the fruit is being preserved, the stones of plums, nuts, and the like, are carefully laid by. A number of small canvas bags are then made, into which these stones are placed, and the ends being sewn together, completes the manufacture. On a winter's evening they are placed on the stove or kitchen-range until bed-time, when the occupants of the separate beds take their *stone-bags*, carefully huddled up in their clothing to retain the heat, up to their chambers in happy prospect of a speedy "turn in," and welcome sleep. In the morning, too, these bags afford an invariable fund of amusement to the juvenile members of the family, when they try to pitch them at one another's heads across the room, as they would their pillows. Such a scene suggests a boarding-school frolic: nevertheless, exploits of this kind cannot possibly excel the humours that must have been witnessed in England in the olden time, when a number of persons of the same sex slept in one apartment, and possessing only one candle, it became an all-round fancy to put out the light by throwing their shirts or shifts at it, but which bit of fun frequently threatened to set the house on fire!

And now to conclude. The present is essentially an advanced age—one in which little restriction is placed upon the domestic habits of individuals by either law or society. True, the partisans of the social circle find it necessary to conform to the example of their betters by rising, eating, and retiring at unseasonable hours, in comparison with the natural dictates of our species; but it has been a gradual process, while, to say the least, it is far from disagreeable to those whose positions warrant, or tastes covet, the change. Very different would be the public opinion, were the hours of going to bed to be once more compulsory; if the sounds of the curfew bell again commanded the fires of the people to be extinguished for the night, as was the regulation introduced by Alfred the Great, and which remained in vogue until the close of the fifteenth century. During that period—

To rise at five, to dine at nine,
To sup at five, to bed at nine,
Makes a man live to ninety-nine,

was looked upon by all as a rubric to be strictly enforced, and of which the amended version—

Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise,

may be regarded as sufficiently exemplary for our own use.

In spite of the much-abused habits of modern life, however, a fair proportion of the community still live to an advanced age, and indeed there is no reason why we should return to the primitive code, as regulated by our forefathers, the general public health of the nineteenth century being, on the whole, vastly superior to any corresponding period in the past.

NELLIE'S BIRTHDAY.

LET ev'ry brow be free from care,
And ev'ry heart be filled with glee;
Whilst Nellie in her rocking-chair
Is smiling joyously to see—
How all her brothers cluster 'round,
Each anxious, first, to get the kiss;
Whilst baby makes a crowing sound,
And wishes Nellie joy by this.

There, John and Frank with rosy cheeks,
And Kenny with his sunny smile,
List with surprise as Percy speaks
His mind in quaint, precocious style:
"This makes three birthdays, now, in June,
And as the truth should be expressed,
I'll sing it to a merry tune,
And say I like the baby's best.

"The king is dead, long live the queen;"
Cries Mr. ——— with a cheer:
"I'm glad no rivalry is seen,
From Percy in his new career;
No longer baby now, but boy,
The new one holds his former place,
And since he greets the change with joy,
We willingly salute Her Grace.

"Then let us all with one accord,
Mamma, the baby, and the boys,
Our exultation now record,
And see that Nell this day enjoys:
We hope that happiness attend,
And wisdom guide her ev'ry day,
May pleasure with her duties blend
And Heav'nly light illumine her way."

So said they all and so say I,
And so let all well-wishers sing;
Let acclamations rise on high,
And gladness make the welkin ring.
May Nellie with each birthday feel,
Tho' loved-ones die and years pass o'er,
She yet may hope, 'midst woe or weal,
For many happy birthdays more.

FRANCIS ERNEST BRADLEY.

Manchester, June 13.

DR. GOLDSMITH.

LEOPARDI in his *Pensieri*, has the following astute observation—"It is the great wish of developing men to forestall maturity; but when they are mature they sigh to be only men of promise again." Oliver Goldsmith, the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, when he reached forty, dropped the *Doctor* out of his address; for such a proof of gravity—in his early years so dear to him—had become distasteful. He might well wish to drop the "Dr." (if it be a fact that he did so wish), for physic was certainly not his forte. When he came to London from the Continent in 1756, it was understood he had a diploma from some foreign University, which entitled him to call himself doctor; and he actually set up, some time afterwards, as a physician in Bankside, where he visited his poor patients in a tarnished green and gold suit. But in 1758 he was plucked in a medical examination at the Old Bailey, being found not qualified for the post of mate to a hospital. Not deterred by this misfortune, about ten years after he deliberately set up again as a London doctor, in a good part. He got on very well, as far as costume went, for the faithful Filby rigged him up in purple silk small-clothes, and a scarlet roquelaire buttoned to the chin. He sported, moreover, the customary gold-headed cane. Of his patients, however, history only records the name of one Mrs. Sidebotham. For this lady he prescribed such a rattling dose that the apothecary, through fear of being held accessory to homicide, declined to make it up; and the worthy Sidebotham, escaping thus miraculously from the jaws of death, promptly dismissed her physician. Goldsmith was huffed, and gave up practice. Poor soul, it was better to be huffed than to be hanged, which he must have ultimately been, had he continued to prescribe. And yet in Letter 24, and again in Letter 68, of *The Citizen of the World*, there is some capital satire on quacks, from the pen of the physician who went in for a mateship in a hospital, and was found "not qualified."

PAUL BENISON.

LOVE IS MORE THAN LIFE.

BY MABEL COLLINS.

Author of "In the Flower of Her Youth," "Viola Fanshawe," &c. &c.

CHAPTER LII.

"WHEN HIS DEBTS ARE PAID!"

MR. WHITEHEAD was sitting in the very small front parlour of one of the grandest cottages at Ilverton. He was endeavouring to feel comfortable in the most uneasy of easy chairs, and he held in his hand a copy of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It was the nearest approach to light literature which could be found in the cottage; but it was not the kind of writing which the old lawyer understood or appreciated. His mind kept wandering away to the episodes of that afternoon, when Agatha had been welcomed in this lonely little village, as a queen returned from exile might be

welcomed by her subjects. There was no further possibility of doubt as to her identity from the moment they drove past the first of the cottages. Soon the whole village was out on the green, surrounding the fly in which Agatha and the lawyer had driven from the station. The new people at Dene House had not fulfilled what the villagers considered their just expectations; and Agatha's return to live there was their greatest hope. When a sort of public reception had been given her on the village green, Agatha, in company with the lawyer, went to visit the various cottages where old men and women sat by the hearth unable to move. Everywhere, the moment her face was seen, she was welcomed with the cry of—

"Miss Agatha! I'm glad to see you back again!" And the next words were generally a wail. "Miss Agatha, why don't you come and live in your own house? There's been nobody to bring me anything for my rheumatics since ever you went away."

Mr. Whitehead sat thinking of all this, and of how unconsciously he and Agatha's trustees, had been made innocent accomplices in this great fraud. The trustees, neither of whom were rich men, had determined to offer Agatha all they could in some reparation of the wrong which had been done her. All the way from town, Mr. Whitehead had been trying to argue her into accepting a cheque from them for her immediate necessities at least. But Agatha would not hear of it; she only laughed and said, that any dairymaid would think a hundred pounds a fortune; and had she not a whole hundred pounds to spend?

"She has never been able to imagine—she has never been allowed to realize—what she ought to have had!—what she has lost. Fancy one of the greatest heiresses in the kingdom talking like that! She has no idea of the value of money. A more unworldly creature I never saw."

Mr. Whitehead was saying this to himself instead of reading the page before him, when Agatha opened the door and came in. Her face startled him.

"My dear young lady!" he exclaimed putting down his book, "has anything happened? Nothing can have happened, surely, in this out-of-the-world place."

"Something has happened though," said Agatha. "Something very extraordinary."

She came and sat down by the table, and put the leather belt upon it.

"Have you a pen-knife?" she asked.

"A pen-knife—yes, of course I have. Here it is. But what has happened?"

"You shall see," said Agatha, as she took the penknife and began to cut the stitchings of the belt. Mr. Whitehead sat and watched her in profound perplexity and amazement. Presently she began cautiously to loosen the contents of the belt and lay them on the table. Mr. Whitehead uttered an inarticulate cry of astonishment; he said nothing—he was too much absorbed in watching the gradual increase of this brilliant collection of stones which was being formed upon the cottage table—he could only look on breathlessly. He soon understood that these were the Vanecourt diamonds. When he realized this, he looked up at Agatha's face. When she entered, it had been white, with the shadow of the horror on it; her

eyes had a wild, terrified expression in them. Now her face had begun to flame with excitement, and her eyes were as brilliant as the stones they gazed at. Mr. Whitehead leaned back in his chair.

"She's a Vanecourt, after all" he said to himself "she has never discovered the value of money; but her instincts awake at the sight of these stones. I've discovered her weak spot. She is a jewel-worshipper!"

Agatha emptied the leathern belt, and spread all its gleaming contents on the table. Then she looked across them, at Mr. Whitehead.

"Please"—she said "you must sell some of these diamonds for me."

Mr. Whitehead started as if he had been shot.

"Sell them!" he exclaimed "my dear young lady, what for? you must be dreaming."

"Not at all" said Agatha, "I don't care for diamonds."

"Not care for diamonds!" repeated Mr. Whitehead, a little confused. For certainly Agatha's face had led him to conclude otherwise, so vivid a glow had come upon it, when she saw that her jewels were safe.

"No—" she said deliberately "I really don't care for diamonds. I have never worn them—why should I ever wear them? I shall never now appear before the world as a great heiress, I shall never bear my own name. Why should I wear the Vanecourt diamonds, when I disown the name, the position and the heritage of disgrace, that has come to me from the Vanecourts? I don't want diamonds, and I do want money."

"But you can have money by merely saying the word!" exclaimed Mr. Whitehead, roused by this inconsistency.

"My trustees shall not be made to pay for a fraud in which they had no share or part," said Agatha very decidedly. "My mind is made up about that. But these jewels are my own."

"You have not told me yet, where you found them."

"I did not find them. They were given to me by the man who was supposed to have stolen them, and who has kept them for me all this while."

Mr. Whitehead opened his eyes very wide. But without waiting for him to ask any questions, Agatha began to tell him George Marlowe's story. Mr. Whitehead took off his gold-rimmed glasses, and wiped them a great many times during the progress of the tale. It was a familiar method with him of expressing profound astonishment.

"And now that they have returned to you after so many adventures, you want to sell these diamonds! though your mother, Mrs. Dering, this young fellow—all have taken the greatest trouble to preserve the heirloom intact for you!"

"If my mother were here" said Agatha "I would tell her what I want the money for. I will tell you—after you have got it for me."

"Well!"—said Mr. Whitehead with a sigh of resignation "you have got the Dering temper. I suppose it's no use to try and move you when your mind is once made up."

"None at all!" said Agatha with a laugh. "I am going to stay in London till you have sold some of these and got me as much money as I want. Then, what shall I do with the others?"

"Have them re-set" said Mr. Whitehead promptly.

"I don't know" said Agatha doubtfully "they

must go into the bank, or some safe place till I have had time to think about it."

She sat still a long while, her eyes upon the diamonds. Mr. Whitehead watched her for some time. Presently he rose, and went outside the cottage to smoke his evening cigar, and think over the strange story he had just heard.

Left alone, Agatha gathered up the jewels in her hands, laughing as she did so.

"When his debts are paid!" She whispered softly to herself.

CHAPTER LIII.

"THE BATTLE FIELD IS WITHIN US ALL."

ABOUT half-way between Ferrybridge and Brookwood Hamlet stood a deserted cottage and barn, which Mr. Meredith immediately thought of when Leonard Dering said he wanted a studio in the forest. They went to look at it as they walked to Ferrybridge together, and Leonard quickly decided that it would exactly suit his purpose. So the owner of the land on which it stood was surprised by finding that he had the chance of a tenant, and not only a tenant but one who looked as if he would pay his rent, and who proposed to make alterations at his own expense. Seeing Leonard to be a gentleman, the landlord and his neighbours immediately concluded that he was mad; no gentleman, they agreed, could wish to live in such a shanty unless he were mad. This public opinion did not trouble Leonard, who quickly set about getting his workshop ready. His whole attention was devoted to the barn, into the roof of which a large studio window was put; and some bizarre furnishing was done inside. But the cottage was left in its desolateness.

For the present, Leonard yielded to the Merediths' entreaties to go on staying at the Vicarage. Mr. Meredith found his society a delightful break in the monotony of his life in the forest; and even Mrs. Meredith felt that while such a romance was going on in their parish they ought to be in the thick of it. She never thawed towards Agatha, whom she always regarded with suspicion, on the ground that she was decidedly too good-looking to be going about the world alone. But she liked to have Leonard there, and devoted all her talents to the discovery of fragments of Agatha's story which she had not heard before. She worked like a Pompeian excavator, or a geologist on a fossil bed; nothing was beneath her notice, and she was perpetually piecing the fresh scraps into the old outline which she had obtained from her son. The result was something totally different from Agatha's real history, and something which changed every day. It was a great amusement to her; and a kind of discipline for Leonard. But he escaped from it as much as possible; as soon as his studio was habitable he spent all the daylight there. While it was being got ready he had gone out sketching indefatigably, in all weathers; when it was raining fast, and no ordinary person would have dreamed of going out of doors, Leonard went away into the forest with his paint-box. Then, suddenly, he entered a new phase. An idea had taken possession of him. He sent to London for

a big canvas, and spent all day in his studio. After this had lasted some time, Mr. Meredith yielded to his curiosity and walked over to see what was going on.

He found Leonard walking about the room in a mood so absorbed that at first he did not see Meredith enter. On the easel stood the big canvas: it was perfectly clean, not a mark had been put on it. In the middle of the room was a table, on which lay an open book. In various places, where the light suited them best, were displayed several charcoal sketches. Leonard was wandering about looking at these from all points of view; and then returning to the table every now and then to gaze at the open pages of the book.

"What can all this mean?" said Mr. Meredith to himself; "surely some great work of art is about to be commenced!"

So thinking, he sat down very quietly on a chair near the door, much amused at having got in unnoticed. The sketches all dealt with the same subject, only treating it differently. In all alike there was a battle-field: opposing armies stood face to face; there were phalanxes of warriors and great war-chariots. And in a space between the two there was a solitary chariot; two figures occupied it, but they were so vaguely indicated by a stroke or two of charcoal, that Meredith could not make any guess as to what they might be: nor could he conjecture what the whole scene was intended to represent. But he concluded that the clue could be discovered in the book which lay on the table; so when Leonard's erratic course took him away around the studio Mr. Meredith went quietly up to the table.

The book was the "Bhagavadgita." As Mr. Meredith looked at the pages which lay open, his eyes recognised the sentence which was expressed in the sketches:

"Having spoken thus, Arjuna cast aside his bow, together with the arrows, on the battle-field, and sat down in his chariot with a mind agitated by grief."

Leonard turned and saw him, as he stood by the table reading. He came up to him and put his hand on his shoulder.

"Look at my sketches," he said, "not at the book, and tell me which it shall be."

"I have been looking at them a long while," said Mr. Meredith, "and I cannot decide between them. They each give a spirited idea of a battle-field in the days when there were grand war-chariots."

"But the central group—Arjuna and his charioteer—the battle-field is comparatively easy. Is Krishna to turn away from the 'white steeds' he is holding, to address Arjuna—or is the character of the charioteer to remain the principal one in view, and shall he merely turn his head toward Arjuna? That is my present difficulty."

"Krishna tells him to fight, and not be a coward, doesn't he? and goes on to elaborate a metaphysical treatise while the battle waits?"

"No, the battle does not wait, for Arjuna begins to fight as soon as he begins to learn. The battle-field is within us all. How well I know Arjuna's mood! When he has flung away his weapons and given way to profound dejection, he knows not why he should do battle, nor why he should war with himself."

"And why must he?"

"Because those mighty warriors that line the battle-field with their great war-chariots are his own good and evil desires. He must choose. Is it not so?"

"Arjuna, then, is the soul?"

"Krishna is the man's spiritual aspiration; Krishna, the divine light within him. Can I paint Krishna's face?—that is the question. At first I thought to turn it away—to make him look towards the great white horses that he holds in check."

"No, don't do that," said Mr. Meredith. "Krishna's face will be that by which the picture will stand or fall. We all know you have vigour enough in you to paint a battle-field."

"Then it must be this," said Leonard, selecting one of the sketches, and placing it on the easel in front of the large canvas. It was one in which Krishna's full face and figure stood revealed as he turned towards Arjuna, who sat, bowed down with uncertainty and despair, behind him in the chariot.

"Krishna, the divine light within us—the type of the ideal! It should take a man's lifetime to paint a picture with such a face as that in it."

"And how long shall you take over it?"

"If I paint it at all—if I can catch the vision of it that is in my mind—it will be finished by the spring." So saying, he began to hunt about for a piece of charcoal. Presently finding one, he approached the big canvas.

"Are you positively going to begin?" said Mr. Meredith.

"Yes, positively."

"Then I'll go home and leave you to tear yourself to pieces alone. Don't forget to come to dinner this evening."

Leonard made no answer: he did not hear the reminder. He was absorbed in the contemplation of his idea. He, to whom the struggle for victory between good and evil had been so real a thing in his own life, felt as if Arjuna were himself, and as though he had heard the neighing of those war-horses and the blowing of the conches. The scene was one he knew; had he ever seen Krishna's face? That he was not sure of, though he fancied he had felt his presence. But he began his work in the confidence of the enthusiast. Perhaps, if he so earnestly desired to see Krishna's face it might shape itself to him at last, out of the dimness of his soul.

Mr. Meredith went away from the studio wrapped in his thoughts so deeply that he did not notice a spring-cart which approached him, and the fair face of one who sat in it, upon which came a bright smile at the sight of him. He was thinking of Leonard: of the power of that influence which had changed the whole current of his life; he was thinking of his future and the great promise that was held in it. For Leonard's work was full of talent; it was easy to see that he must succeed.

He was awakened from these thoughts by the spring cart stopping abruptly. Looking up he saw Agatha.

"I want so much to speak to you, Mr. Meredith," she said, "that I think I will dismiss my carriage and walk a little way with you. I can easily walk home from here. I have just come back from London again."

By this time she had accomplished the difficult feat of getting out of a spring-cart with grace:

and now the cart drove away. They walked on along the bright, sandy road; the hedges were full of autumn colours, the sky was clear and high and full of light. But Agatha's face and eyes were brighter, more brilliant with rich colour, more fascinating in their changing beauty. Mr. Meredith sighed as he remembered whence Leonard had drawn his inspiration.

Agatha had something very difficult to say; she had to make quite a long speech in order to say it, and she blushed deeply before she finished. But her mind was made up to say it all, and she did not hesitate now, though Mr. Meredith looked bewildered and surprised. At last, however, he fully understood her meaning. He was to learn from Leonard Dering, under the guise of mere friendly interest, all he could about the debts which hampered him; and then he was to receive from Agatha the value of as many of the Vane-court diamonds as might be necessary to clear those same debts altogether, and quietly to remit the amounts. Mr. Meredith was not very well pleased at first to be the agent of this generous schemer in this particular matter; but it was impossible to refuse Agatha. And when he had agreed to take the task upon himself he was glad he had done so; at least he could serve her still by reason of his silence, although he might never speak of his love for her. It was but a doubtful pleasure to do this; it had a sharp sting of pain in it. Yet he was glad that she had asked him.

Then he told her about Leonard's picture, and of how he was absorbed in the enthusiasm of his work. Agatha's heart sang within her. It was a keen delight to her that she had the power to free him from the fetters which might drag him down from his path of ideal labour.

When Mr. Meredith left her she walked home to her cottage with a light step, singing to herself as she went. Not even a long year ago, when she had never met the dread ghouls, trouble and crime, had the sky overhead looked brighter, or the future before her more glorious.

Mrs. Birchmore had stayed at the cottage this time, and she welcomed Agatha with rapt delight. "God bless ye, missie!" she cried, at the sight of her, "ye're the only creature in this here desert worth lookin' at."

CHAPTER LIV.

MATED.

A YEAR had passed since that day when first we saw Agatha Vale gathering flowers in the garden of Dene House. Only a year, yet as much trouble, shame, adventure, hope and happiness had been crowded into it as might fill many years of some quiet lives. Agatha was a child in heart and thought and feeling a year ago; now she was a woman strong to suffer, strong to love. The strange, eventful year had left its mark upon her face; but it had added to its beauty.

Outside her cottage the world was all loveliness; the mild days of the first dawn of spring were as fair as they had been last year, when she gathered the sweet violets for her grandmother. Great bushes of laurestinns were covered with bloom; the snowdrops were in flower, and here

and there a cluster of early primroses, or, in some sheltered, warm nook, a sweet violet.

Agatha was in her orchard, wandering hither and thither to look for the flowers, and singing to herself as she moved. To-day was her wedding day.

A month ago Mr. Meredith had finished his appointed task by telling Leonard what had been done. Leonard made him no answer when he told the tale, but put down his palette and brushes and went away on the instant to Agatha to ask her if it was true. It was true—and it meant more than his freedom—it meant that the wedding need be postponed no longer. Except that the picture must be finished—that they both felt. It belonged to the time and state of feeling in which it was conceived and painted. But it was nearly complete; Leonard had worked through every hour of daylight while the fever was on him. It did but want a few weeks more of such work. Leonard gave himself a month to finish it in; in a month they were to be married. And so it was; the picture was finished and the wedding day had come.

It was early yet; Agatha and the old servant were up while the morning was young. Now the cottage was all in perfect order within; Mrs. Birchmore wore a new print, starched as stiff as a gown could be; and Agatha was outside among the flowers. She was watching the road, too; for she expected the old lawyer, who had announced his intention of coming down from town to see the wedding and give Agatha away. He had never visited Agatha's cottage; and she looked forward with some amusement to seeing what he would think of it as an abode for an heiress. Hearing the sound of wheels at last, she went round the cottage and opened the little wicket gate. Yea, it was Mr. Whitehead; his driver stopped, and the old lawyer put up his gold-rimmed glasses to see what it was for. At the sight of Agatha he quickly got out of the carriage and came to her, as she stood by the gate.

"Now, my dear young lady," he said, after a minute or two, "get into the carriage and let us drive on to the house."

"This is the house," said Agatha. "Please come in."

"This!" exclaimed Mr. Whitehead in unfeigned astonishment. He had been prepared for a cottage; but this did not answer even to his ideas of a cottage. He thought it more likely to be a piggery, viewing it, as he did, on its windowless side. However he said nothing; but quietly followed Agatha up the little path and around to the front of the cottage.

"Come in," said Agatha, "you must sit by a kitchen fire for once in your life. And you shall have some coffee, for I am sure you had breakfast very early."

"Well, I must say this is an æsthetic kitchen," said Mr. Whitehead, looking around. "I wonder if my cook would like things like this in her kitchen. It certainly looks very nice. But imagine the Hon. Miss Vale living here! I may laugh a little, may I not, now it is so nearly over?"

"Laugh as much as you like," said Agatha, "fancy yourself playing in a comedy."

"I hear Red Mount is really a lovely place," said Mr. Whitehead; "do you like it?"

"Oh yes," said Agatha, "it is perfect. Leonard's studio is magnificent."

"Well, I am glad you are pleased, for you have spent a great deal of money on it. And you are going to spend your honeymoon there?"

"Yes; at home. I shall regret my dear cottage, that is all. I am very sorry to leave it. I would give it to Mrs. Birchmore, only she wouldn't value it."

"No, miss, no thankee!" muttered the old servant, who was rustling about in her stiff gown, getting coffee for Mr. Whitehead, "I wouldn't have a palace, that I wouldn't, not in this here desolate 'ole place. I never would have stayed here a day but for missie there—I couldn't leave her, you see, sir, to be at the mercy of these here country folkses."

"And you're not going to leave her now, are you?" said Mr. Whitehead.

"No," said Agatha, "she is going to keep house for me. I shall be very sorry for the servants—they'll all have to be up at five, whether it's any use or no."

"Certainly, miss. Lazy sluts! let 'em lie abed once and they'll allers want to! I know 'em."

"There's one place you will not," said Agatha, laughing, "and that's my dairy. And you won't get the dairymaid up at five, for the dairymaid will be me."

"No, miss, of course; if a lady will insist on doing what isn't her place, an' what she's got no right to do, she must do it as she likes."

So saying Mrs. Birchmore went away to her scullery, where she vented her feelings about Agatha's butter-making upon the pots and pans.

"I have heard from George Marlowe," said Mr. Whitehead, as soon as they were alone.

"Oh, I am so glad you have found him!" exclaimed Agatha.

"Nothing will induce him to come home at present," said Mr. Whitehead, "but when he does come, he promises to visit you at Red Mount."

"Well, that is something," said Agatha. "He will do it if he has said he will. And I must hope for better luck with him next time. I want to try and persuade him to settle on the estate at Red Mount. We need such faithful servants, Leonard and I. He is so absorbed in his art, and in that philosophy of the East, that I hardly expect him to look very much after the practical details of the property. And I must confess that since I have known Colonel Atman, and seen his wonderful doings and heard his words, I fear I am what you would call less practical than I was."

"You are touched with the craze," said Mr. Whitehead drily.

"You must see Leonard's picture," was all Agatha's answer. "The ideas that have produced such work as that become absorbing when once they are understood. There is a great future before him; my highest pleasure will be to help him in it."

She spoke with enthusiasm; and as the old lawyer had a very tender feeling for her, he forbore to remark that in his eyes art and philosophy were equally valueless. He was afraid of pursuing a subject on which there was so little sympathy between them; so he turned the conversation.

"I have been to Rome, among other places, about your money," he observed, "and I saw one

day a familiar face in a very handsome private carriage which was driving on the Pincio. The horses were superb; I noticed them first, and then I noticed this face. Ann Rickman sat in that carriage, dressed as duchesses are popularly supposed to dress."

"Then she has money still?" said Agatha; "was Martin with her?"

"No," said Mr. Whitehead, in his driest manner. With a little cough he changed the conversation again.

"I have sold both Vanecourt House and the Dene now," he said. "It seemed a great pity for you to part with them. I still cannot understand your wish."

"I wish to have done altogether with the past; it's memory is a shame and horror to me. Only my dear grannie I shall always remember with love; but can you think I could live near that terrible Dene and its associations? No; I can fancy her with me always; I seem never to have lost her companionship and sympathy. I know what she would expect of me, and try to please her. I think of her as if she were alive—I want to forget her horrible death."

"Missie!" exclaimed Mrs. Birchmore, coming in as she tied on her bonnet firmly, as though the coming event needed extra precautions of that sort. "We'll be late at the church if we don't start. Mr. Leonard and Mr. Meredith, they'll be frettin' theirselves out o' their skins if we're late."

Agatha's face had grown pale while she was speaking; but at Mrs. Birchmore's words the colour flushed it vividly. She sprang up at once.

"I must go for my bonnet" she said. Ten minutes later she came down again, ready dressed for the drive to Ferrybridge.

"It is not as you should be dressed" said Mr. Whitehead, rising as she came in, "it is not the right sort of thing for a great lady; but I wish your mother could see how lovely you look!"

Agatha wore a pale gray dress and bonnet: a costume such as she might have worn to walk in her garden when the ground was dry; a cluster of spring flowers was the only ornament of her dress. On this fair spring morning the simple costume looked better than any satin and lace and jewels could have done. Agatha herself, with the light step and brilliant smile, seemed like a happy spirit of the woods, or the dawn herself, tempted by rare happiness to linger after the sun was high.

The old lawyer, and Agatha, and Mrs. Birchmore drove away to Ferrybridge Church between the fragrant hedgerows. At the little church there was much suppressed excitement. Quiet though the wedding was to be, the altar was heaped with spring flowers; and the children of the choir had gathered together to sing such music as they could. Mr. Meredith waited in the vestry; he alone was to perform the service. Leonard would not hear of any one else doing that office. Love is blind, and so he never guessed why Mr. Meredith seemed unwilling. But he gave in at last; it was his fate to serve these happy lovers. And after all it gave him a certain painful happiness to do it.

Leonard and Mrs. Meredith watched for Agatha. Both were excited, though for very different

reasons. It had been impossible to conceal from Mrs. Meredith Agatha's real name any longer; and, as a natural consequence, she had to hear the whole story. When she realized who Agatha was, and remembered that she was going to live at Red Mount and would be one of the great ladies of the county, she became consumed by one absorbing desire: to impress upon every one the fact that she had believed in Agatha all along, had recognized her as a lady, had been her friend in adversity. With this idea always before her, she succeeded in taking a prominent part in the proceedings to-day. She it was who clasped Agatha's hand as she descended from the carriage, who followed her into the church and stood behind her at the altar.

Agatha went out of the spring sunshine into the quiet little flower-decked church; she left the unhappy past behind her, and entered upon the golden future where love and hope made all things beautiful.

THE END.

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And the threat of murdering a female relative was actually carried out in another case, and the woman slain merely to make a statement more emphatic. This was doubtless painful to the Brahmin; and obviously embarrassing to the Englishman; but words cannot describe what a bore it must have been to the lady. One has heard of a troubled and exciting career concluding only in pointing a moral or adorning a tale, but to bear all the anxieties of life simply to end as a kind of physical note of admiration, is too bad. To be brought in as part of an address, and serve temporarily as an illustration, with a sword through your body, and "there!" for an epitaph: a poor and pitiful finale, in sober truth!

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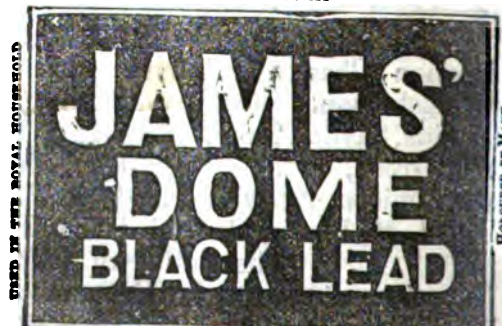
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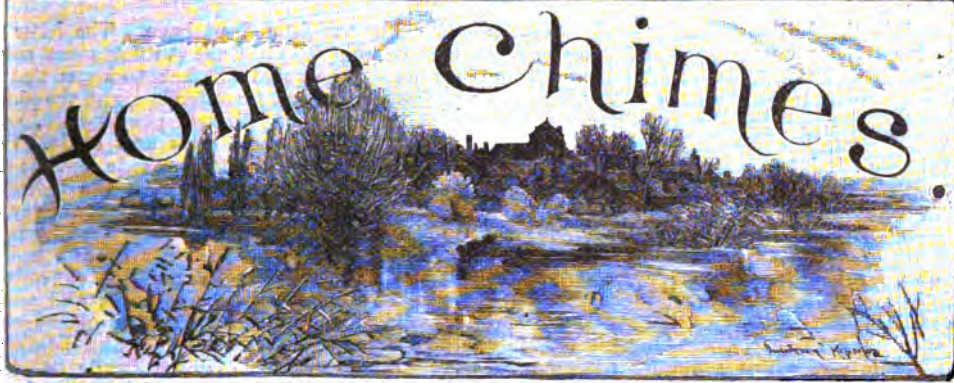
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"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever," "Juliet's Guardian,"
"Pure Gold," "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE VICAR'S DAUGHTER.

VIOLET CLAYTON was the only child of a widower, a clergyman, who held a living, large in extent, but poor in pay, on the dreariest part of the Essex coast.

All her life long, from five years old to twenty-one, with the exception of a yearly visit to her father's brother, also a clergyman, in the next county, and an occasional trip into Yarmouth or Colchester, all her life long had Violet spent in that self-same village of Sandhaven.

Under these circumstances, the daughter of a clergyman usually leads a useful and a happy life. She visits the poor, she teaches in the Sunday-schools, she organizes the boot and shoe club, she takes a lively interest in scarlet flannel petticoats and in poor-bags, and she finally falls in love with and marries her father's curate. None of these things did Violet Clayton do. She disliked cottages and Sunday-schools, and poor people generally; she took no interest whatever in old women and their garments; the advent of new infants in the village produced no excitement in her mind; and as to poor Mr. Robinson, her father's fair-haired, weak-eyed curate, he had sighed out his soul to her in vain for years.

Violet simply detested him.

Not that she ever told him so, poor fellow—not she! Violet never said unkind things. She smiled at him with her sweet smile, and just whispered out that it could "never, never be," with a tremor in her voice as if her heart would break; so that the poor young man would take

courage still to hope and wait, thinking that truly in the end she would come to love him.

But Violet did not waste many thoughts on Luke Robinson and his love. She had other troubles of her own. Such as they were, they were very real troubles to her, and her life was spent in brooding over them. From the bleak little valley, where stood the ugly red-brick parsonage, where she grew up from a pretty child into a lovely woman, you could see the long blue line of sea, and, at low tide, the thin streaks of the yellow sandbanks, where, winter after winter, ships were lost, while sometimes the top of a mast, sticking up above those cruel sands, would mark the spot where they had gone to pieces. Violet would lean out of her bed-room window, and look away seawards for hours at a time, day-dreaming as to how she should get away from her daily life and its narrow groove into some gay, beautiful world of her own fancy.

There came no railway to Sandhaven, so the blue sea and the yellow sandbanks always seemed to her to be the natural door of escape from her captivity. How would it open to her? Would some great ship be wrecked on the sands out there, and the fairy prince who was to rescue her be washed ashore in the village? Should she nurse him through a long illness—poor Violet, who did not know how to nurse a kitten!—and then would he marry her, and carry her away with him to London? Or would he come in some other way, disguised as a walking tourist, perhaps, to visit their quaint little old church; and would he fall in love with her, and carry her off—by force, perhaps—to a life in some fairy land across the sea? There was always, you perceive, a fairy prince in her day-dreams, and he was always young and handsome, but, above all, he was always rich!

And then would come her father's voice at the foot of the stairs, calling out to her to come down and pour out tea, which was getting cold, or to tie up his newspapers for the post; and away would vanish the day-dreams and the fairy

prince into the dull commonplaces of the girl's daily life. What was the use of having beauty and youth and talent, as Violet felt and knew she possessed, to be wasted away in the monotony of a life like hers? "Oh, if she could only have one single chance, one single opportunity!" she would cry out aloud to herself, with a sort of passion, clenching her white hands and stamping her foot with despair, while tears as bitter as ever a bereaved maiden shed filled her eyes with an intensity of self-pity over her own fate! From whence did the girl get these passionate longings for another sort of life—this restless desire to be free, this insatiable ambition to try her fate elsewhere? Not certainly from her father, whose naturally narrow mind and stagnant imagination had become so dwarfed and bounded by the petty details of the daily routine of a life-time, that he had no thoughts or interests that were not contained within the parish of Sandhaven.

Violet had nothing in common with her father; his thoughts and hers travelled as far apart as if they had not belonged to each other in any way. Her father did not inspire her with any interest—hardly with any affection; he was one of the surroundings of the life against which she rebelled, a part of Sandhaven, a necessary evil. But it was the dead mother, whom she did not remember, to whom her thoughts constantly recurred with the intensest interest and curiosity. Her mother had been a beauty, a gay butterfly of fashion, admired, courted and flattered, and yet she had left it all one morning to run away with John Clayton, when he was only an Oxford under-graduate, two or three years younger than herself! "What did she do it for! what did she do it for! how could she?" Violet used to ask herself a hundred times as she pored over the old miniature in its well-worn case which lay always on her father's study table. And the sweet face with its large blue eyes and rosy lips, and its brown hair all done up in great curls and bows under the high, old-fashioned comb—smiled back at her ever the same, but never gave her back an answer to her question. "How could she do such a thing?" cried Violet, with a ring in her voice that was anything but complimentary to her father, and she could never find out a satisfactory reason to account for a step which always seemed to her to have been simple madness.

The idea of love never once so much as entered into Violet's mind. It was upon her mother's family, and her mother's friends, that all her hopes of future emancipation were fixed. As to her mother's relations, she could not find out much about them. They had, naturally enough, been very angry at her marriage, and had not taken any notice of her father. From her old nurse she learnt that her mother had had only one sister, who, she believed, had married, but whether she was alive or dead, or what her married name had been, the nurse could not say. But her chief hopes and expectations were all centred upon a certain Mrs. Barrington, who was her godmother, and who had been her mother's greatest friend. Violet possessed a silver mug which had been given her in her infancy by this godmother; not only that, but Mrs. Barrington knew her address, and had not lost sight of her, and when she was sixteen, she had received a letter from her, accom-

panied by a registered package. The letter said that as she supposed she (Violet) must now be confirmed, she would like her to know that her godmother had not forgotten her, and the package contained an ivory-backed prayer-book, and a very pretty little pearl cross and chain. Violet tossed the prayer-book to one side, but the cross and chain she treasured up with the keenest delight. She had never been to a party of any sort in her life, but, many and many a night in her own bedroom she fastened her cross round her neck when she went to bed, and got out some old faded silk dresses of her mother's, and arrayed herself in them, putting her looking-glass down on the floor to see the effect better, and lighting up every candle she could lay her hands on. Then she would stalk up and down her little barely-furnished room, fancying herself the belle of some crowded ball-room. Some day, thought Violet, Mrs. Barrington would remember her again: she would probably die and leave all her money to her beloved goddaughter Violet Clayton, and if she were rich she would be free—for, said Violet to herself, with that worldly wisdom which was a part of her nature, "Money is power; beauty without money is of no use; but some day I may wake up to find I have both." This, however, did not happen precisely. Mrs. Barrington did not die; but when Violet was twenty-one she wrote her another letter. This time there was no registered package by the same post; but Violet was not disappointed, for the contents of the letter were so ecstatically delightful that she felt at once that all her wildest hopes and dreams were realized.

Mrs. Barrington wrote from Scotland—it was in the beginning of August—and she and her husband had just gone up to their moor in Argyleshire. She began by assuring her that she had in no way forgotten her existence, but that as she had not had any intercourse with her father since his marriage, she had not liked to take any active interest in her goddaughter until she was of an age to choose between her father's friends and her mother's; now, however, that Violet was twenty-one, she hoped that Mr. Clayton would reward her forbearance for so many years by allowing her to come to her for a long visit in Scotland. If her father allowed her to come, she, Mrs. Barrington, would send her a cheque for thirty pounds to buy herself some dresses for her visit on her way through town, and she was to come to them as soon as she could get off. All flushed with excitement, Violet flew downstairs to her father's study.

"Papa! papa! Mrs. Barrington has asked me to stay with her—you will let me go? You must let me go!" she cried, in sudden terror, as her father looked up in grave surprise at her.

"How can I afford to pay for you, Violet? you know I've no money; you can't go in cotton frocks?"

"Oh, but Mrs. Barrington will send me thirty pounds," cried Violet breathlessly.

"Let me see the letter," said Mr. Clayton, laying down his pen.

All the time he was reading it she kept up a touching little chorus of—

"Oh, do, dear papa, please let me go?" in a tremulous minor key—all the while saying to herself that she would and should go somehow or other, even if she had to run away from home.

Mr. Clayton was silent for some minutes after he had done reading; looking straight before him, calling back, perhaps, the memory of days and people long since passed away out of his life; then he turned to his daughter—

"Well, my dear, you may go. Mrs. Barrington did not behave well to me, but she was your mother's friend; she means to be kind—you may go;" and Violet, hastily and joyously thanking him, flew upstairs, half crazy with delight, to answer her precious letter.

A few days later, escorted by her old nurse, and furnished with her thirty pounds, and five pounds more added thereto by her father, she went up to the Barrington's empty town house in Eaton Place, whence all her shopping was to be done. Here her genius at once manifested itself. Though she had never been to London in her life, and had no other idea of what was the proper thing to wear in Scotland in August than what she had gathered from some kind hints in Mrs. Barrington's letters, Violet fitted herself out as perfectly and as suitably as any London born and bred girl could possibly have done. In less than a week everything was ready. She had parted from her nurse at the Euston Square Station, and had taken her place in the Scotch express for Glasgow.

CHAPTER II.

GOING NORTH.

As the nine o'clock express steamed slowly out of Euston Station, Violet Clayton settled herself among her rugs, and knitted her soft brows in earnest meditation. No thoughts of going off into a doze entered her mind; she felt that she had a great deal of thinking to do, and as in all the bustle and confusion of the last week this was the first quiet moment she had had for reflection, she proceeded to make up her mind definitely as to her future line of action. Every man and woman, she said to herself, has one opportunity sent to them in the course of their lives, but only the wise know how to make use of it. Violet felt that her opportunity was come, and that it behoved her to be very wise indeed. This month's visit was her one chance: if she wasted or dawdled it away, what lay before her? Nothing but the blackness of despair, in a return to her old life at Sandhaven; whence, possibly, she might never have another opportunity of escape. Calmly and deliberately my heroine, for whom you perceive I can claim no high class of virtues at all, set before herself the one grand end and aim of her existence, which was nothing finer or nobler or more exalted, than the securing to herself a rich prize in the matrimonial lottery.

Sooner than have to put such a thing into words, or have acknowledged it to any living creature, Violet would have died at the stake the death of a martyr; but down in her heart she was talking to herself something in this style:

"I must marry, and I must marry well. I long for ease and luxury and fine clothes, and dainty food, and all the other good things which wealth brings; and to secure all these things I must marry a rich man. If I had been a man, I might have worked my own way and made my fortune,

and should have enjoyed doing it; but to a woman every roadway to ambition is closed, except the one ambition of marriage. To gain this end I must leave no stone unturned. I must make every one my friend, and no one my enemy; I must make up to the women, and the men will follow of themselves. I have no position, no experience, I am an utter stranger to the ways of the world I am going into; but I have wits, and I have beauty; it shall not be my fault if I do not use them both well, and I doubt if I shall find myself surpassed by any of those amongst whom I am going."

Thus poor Violet, in her self-confident wisdom, reasoned to herself as she sat alone in her first-class carriage, whilst the train, which was bearing her to the arena of all her hopes, rushed on through the darkened summer landscape. Blisworth, then Rugby, were passed. Violet was getting a little drowsy and tired of her all engrossing reflections, when another scream from the engine roused her to life, as the train slackened in the station of Stafford.

Without moving from her comfortable attitude on the far side of the carriage, Violet watched idly as the porters hurried up and down on the platform. A good many people seemed to be getting out—a good many more were getting in. Still no one came near her carriage. The guard had just ushered a large family of ladies and children, whom she felt thankful to have escaped, into the next carriage, and shut the door upon them with a loud clap, and was standing outside with his whistle already raised to give the signal, when there came flying along the platform, a porter half buried behind rugs, bag, gun-case, dressing-case, and a bundle of sticks, followed closely by a gentleman, also much encumbered with sundry packages.

"Hold hard!" cried the porter.

"Come, look sharp," answered the guard, then touching his hat respectfully as the gentleman came up—

"I beg pardon, sir, did not see it was you—here you are, sir, this way—here's an empty carriage."

So saying, he flung open the door of the carriage, in the further corner of which Violet, well wrapped up in her dark cloak, and reclining back in the dim light, was not perceived either by the gentleman or by the railway officials.

The bags, gun-cases, and rugs were flung in, the gentleman jumped in after them, and the guard slammed to the door and blew his whistle. Just as the train began to move, some one passed along the platform, and the gentleman started forward and leant out of the window.

"Hullo! Tom."

"Hullo, old fellow! going North?"

"Yes—I'm off after the grouse."

"Lucky beggar! Well, I wish you good sport, only don't try the same game on as last year."

"Not I! I've had enough of that—ha, ha!"

A laugh from both speakers, and then the conversation came, perforce, to an end, as the train steamed away out of the lighted station into the darkness of the night beyond.

Sinking back into his seat, with a laugh still upon his face, and glancing carelessly towards the further side of the carriage, the traveller then perceived for the first time that he was not alone. A woman was standing up with her back turned to him, struggling ineffectually to pull up the

window. He could see nothing of her but her slender figure in a tight-fitting dark dress, and a coil of smooth, bright hair round the back of a small, neat, little head. Yet something told him at once that she was young and beautiful. So utterly had he been unaware of her presence, that he was for half-a-minute quite startled as if she had been an apparition. Only for half-a-minute, and then he started forwards to help with the window.

"Allow me!"

"I think it has stuck. Thank you. That is right."

"You would like it quite up?"

"Yes, thank you."

And then he turned and looked at her. Have I told you what Violet's face was like? I think not. Let me describe it. "With a face made out of a rose," are the words that come into my mind, as I picture her to myself. Such a sweet, soft, tender face, it was, with colouring like a shaded rose-leaf; clear grey eyes with a darker rim round them, and lashes darker still, that fluttered down upon the soft cheek, where the colour came and came like April sunshine; rosy lips, with a little smile or a little sigh constantly hovering about them; a small, clearly-cut nose, with a little, very little, tendency to the "turn-up" about it, just sufficient to give piquancy to a face that was almost too softly lovely; a low, white forehead, over which the bright brown hair grew in wavy lines of gold. Have I described her well?—hardly, I think. How can I put that rich, rare young loveliness into cold words? To see her you would say she was an angel, with every feminine virtue which woman can be blessed with. And you have seen enough of Violet to understand that she was by no means an angel. How she came to possess a face of such exquisite sensibility and tenderness is more than I can say. Was there, all unbeknown to herself, deep down below the worldliness, the heartlessness, the practical selfishness of the girl's character—was there, after all, a soul and a heart, which by some freak of Nature had as yet only been reflected in her face? Kit Barrington put up the window for her, and then he stood still and stared at her.

"Can I—can I do anything else?"

"No, thank you," said Violet, with a demure little smile, sitting down again in her place and busying herself with the contents of her hand-bag.

Her companion bowed, and retired to the further side of the carriage. Presently, as she made no further attempt at conversation, Mr. Barrington took out his newspaper, and adjusting his little travelling lamp behind his head, was soon absorbed in his reading. Then Violet for the first time glanced towards him, and seeing that his face was safely hidden behind the paper, began to make her observations. She noted a splendid otter skin rug which covered his knees. She had tried in vain to screw out a jacket of the same fur for herself from her thirty pounds. And she knew very well that otter fur like that rug must have cost a great deal of money. Then on the floor there stood a large dressing-bag, half open, wherein she could plainly see the gleam of gold-topped bottles and the corner of an elaborate satin sachet. Then there were two gun-cases, a selection of riding-whips and fishing-rods, a

Russian leather box for papers or cigars—probably the latter, said wise Violet, to herself—with an enormous and elaborate monogram upon it, which she vainly endeavoured to decipher at the distance at which she sat. The same monogram was also on the dressing-bag and the gold stoppers to the bottles, and she spent quite twenty minutes in a fruitless endeavour to make it out. Her survey was certainly a very satisfactory one. Everything about her fellow-traveller denoted the perfect appointments of a luxuriously rich man.

Having thoroughly mastered his surroundings, she proceeded to give a critical attention to himself. As he had lowered the paper which had screened him, she was able to pursue her investigations. He was a tall, somewhat spare man, of about five-and-thirty, with a singularly attractive face. His features were straightly and cleanly cut, the mouth concealed by a drooping moustache, and the eyes were dark and deep set, with an expression half of fun, half of tenderness, lurking about them. It was a clever and interesting, but not by any means a handsome face; but for all that there was about the man that look of power which is always so dangerously attractive to a woman. You could fancy how fine that face would be when moved either to deep scorn or to intense passion, and that Kit Barrington was equal to either was a fact that could be read in his countenance. Whether or no Violet thought of all these things I cannot say—probably not; but it is undeniable that the man attracted her as he had attracted many women before. She "took a fancy" to him, and straightway began to weave a romance about him. He was evidently, she thought, a wealthy man, going from his estate in Staffordshire up to his moor in Scotland. Possibly it was situated in Argyleshire, eight or ten miles from Lanfrew, where Violet was going; she would meet him again there. They would, perhaps go over—a large party—to lunch with him at his shooting-box; then he would come over to them. He would, of course, fall in love and propose to her. She would give a reluctant and blushing consent; there would be a month in town for her trousseau; then a gay wedding—eight bridesmaids; no! six, perhaps, would be prettier—less pretentious. A lovely bride in white satin and Brussels lace; a grand breakfast—all at her godmother's expense; wedding cake; favours; a tour on the continent; and then—

"Do you never sleep in a train?" This from the mainspring of all these lovely day-dreams, who suddenly sat upright and looked determined to talk to her.

"Not often," said Violet with her mock-modest look, which was so charmingly attractive; "but," with a sudden flash of those sweet grey eyes up at him, "but I daresay I may to-night, as it is such a long journey."

"You are going through to Scotland?"

"Yes; to Glasgow, where I am to be met by my friends. I am going to Argyleshire," she volunteered.

"Indeed! I know something of Argyleshire. Which part are you going to?"

"I am going to stay with the Barringtons, at Lanfrew," said Violet, with a slight ring of importance in her voice.

"Indeed!" answered her interrogator, with an amused smile.

"Do you know them?" she asked.

"Do I know them? Yes—no; I have heard of them," he answered hesitatingly. And Violet said to herself—

"He evidently knows them and doesn't like them; perhaps they are horrid people. I am sorry I mentioned them." For it will be recollected that she had never seen her godmother. "I really know nothing of them," she hastened to explain. "Mrs. Barrington is my godmother, but I have never seen her." At which Kit Barrington said to himself—

"Then I know who you are, my young lady. You are the unknown Miss Clayton my aunt is bringing from some wild country to civilize into a good match." Aloud he only said, "I hope you may have a pleasant visit."

"I am looking forward to it very much," answered Violet in her most demure voice.

Who would have thought she could have said "bo to a goose!" And yet her companion could not help furtively watching her; there had been a flash in her eyes when she first looked at him, and there was a certain little uplifting of her head when she moved that seemed to indicate more character and spirit than the sweet feminine face gave promise of. There was a something about her which altogether raised her above the level of the ordinary country-bred milk-and-water type of young ladyhood. Kit Barrington asked her no more questions, but he began to talk to her pleasantly and entertainingly upon ordinary topics of conversation. He told her about his travels in Norway and his adventures on a yachting tour round the West coast of Ireland; he talked to her about the novels she had read and the music she was fond of, and about the pictures she had never seen, and which, she thought to herself, she did not care much to see; but to all he said, whether she was really interested by it or not, she paid a most lively attention, with her eyes fixed upon him in wondering delight and her lips parted in eagerness. By-and-by, however, he stopped talking to her, and she grew drowsy; he leant back and closed her eyes, and, gradually lulled by the never-ending rush of the train through the darkness, she fell fast asleep in her corner.

A jangle of dreams, a succession of shocks, a confused babel of voices and cries, a blast of cold air and a sudden lull into silence, and Violet awoke with a start to find her fellow-traveller standing over her shaking her by the shoulder.

"You must wake up at once!"

"What is it?"

"There has been an accident."

"An accident!" she faltered, turning white with terror down to her lips.

(To be continued.)

GENTLEMAN CHIMLEY'S AFFAIR OF THE HEART.

BY J. M. BARRIE.

CHAPTER .

ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION.

THE door-bell rang once, twice, thrice, and my heart sank within me. Mrs. Gowans, my landlady, put her head in at the door, and caught me in the act of turning down the gas.

"Yer ower late, sir," she said mournfully; "it's ane o' them. I ken their ring."

I knew it was one of them too, and I was not unacquainted with their ring. But, for all that, I lowered the gas. In the first place I feared that Mrs. Gowans's body might follow her head into the room, in which case the semi-darkness might prevent her seeing the bones on the table; and in the second place, if the caller was a *Bejeant*—the name given at our Scotch Universities to a first year's man, or green-horn, from *bec jaune*, yellow nib—the darkened window might deceive him. If those "human remains" were observed, I would receive notice to quit "this decent hoose" at once: if Jennie, or Chimley, or Stamford was at the door-bell, pulling it out and in like a concertina, I was lost. Familiarity with my contrivances for pretending I was out when I did not wish to be disturbed, had bred contempt in them. They would ring blandly for an hour, and on the door being at last opened, would walk in as if nothing unusual had happened.

"It's unco hard lines," continued my landlady's head, "that a hard-working student canna be left alane wi' his books by these idle loons. I'se warrant they'll a' be plucked when the examination day comes round."

I groaned acquiescence. It was not that I feared their being plucked—that was a thing they were used to—but that I dreaded such a calamity for myself. I was "grinding" for my "final," and, though I dared not say so to Mrs. Gowans, was at present studying the subject of stomachs. I was strong in stomachs, but weak in knee-joints.

"You have no idea which of them it is?" I asked despairingly, as the clatter of the bell began again.

"I'm thinking it is just Mr. Chimley then," replied the head, "for it's his ring. You see he stops every five minutes or so, to see if he be na' dirtyin' his gloves, or creasin' his collar, while the majority o' them ca' away without intermeession till the door opens."

"You mean Chimley the elder, of course," I asked; "not his brother?"

"Ay, ay, Gentleman. Bless ye, sir, if it had been Rags he would ha' been in langsyne. He kicks at the door till some ane opens, and says 'thankye,' and comes in. But Gentleman would never kick a door; it would soil his shoes."

Supposing now, Mrs. Gowans," I suggested, catching at my last straw, "that you were to tell him I was not, a—well—not at home?"

"Tell a lee, sir! Lor' preserve us a'! I cudna' do that." Then seeing my look of despair—"But mebbe, no, if ye were slippin' doon into the back yard, I cud tell him wi' a clear conscience that ye war na' i' the hoose."

I hesitated. The temptation was considerable, but it was raining heavily, and the back yard had no roof. Besides, the chances were that the visitor would offer to come in and wait.

"Give him another five minutes," I said, "and if he is still there, let him in."

The head retired: I turned up the gas, tied a wet towel round my head, to look as studious as possible, and awaited events.

"How do you do, Smithson?" said Gentleman Chimley, opening my door a few minutes afterwards, and taking me languidly by the hand,

"Hope you are well; haven't seen you for some time; I say, old man, what a beastly stench!"

Gentleman looked hurt, as if I had invited him to my rooms, and then served up human bones for his edification. But his remark cheered me rather than otherwise. I remembered that Chimley considered himself sensitive to smells.

"My bones," I remarked pleasantly, "are in rather an advanced state of decomposition."

"Couldn't you chuck them out at the window?" suggested Gentleman, carefully dusting a chair with a handkerchief, and trying its strength before sitting down.

"Fling away my bones!" I exclaimed haughtily. "Let me tell you this, Chimley, that there are at present other bones in this room with a little flesh on them, that I would much rather dispose of in the way you suggest. Fling my bones out at the window, indeed!"

"Fudge!" replied Chimley, making a cushion for his head out of half-a-dozen antimacassars. "I say, Smithson, have you any beer in the house, or claret?"

"No; I don't keep claret, and Jennie and Stamford were up last night, and finished the beer. You will find some whisky in the cupboard, though."

"Hum; thanks. But you should never let yourself run short of claret. Coarse drink, whisky. However, as you say, it is superior to water. Is this your bell? I think that rang. Ah! Mrs. Gowans, some hot water, please, and sugar, and toddy-ladles."

"I hope you'll make yourself at home, Chimley," I said sarcastically, "because I must read for another six hours or so, myself."

"Thanks, I shall; don't mind me."

After that there was silence for a period, only broken at rare intervals by the rustling of the pages of my book, or by the clink of Chimley's toddy-ladle against his glass.

Gentleman was not enjoying his toddy, and I had lost all further appetite for my stomach. The fact was, that I saw something was wrong, and longed for Chimley to enter into explanations. Never before, in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, had he paid a visit in such dirty gloves, and I was pained, as well as alarmed, to notice a crease in his trousers. Magnificent Chimley—who was currently reported to boil himself down into a liquid every morning, before he could be poured into his tight-fitting garments, and then to sit at an open window until he solidified—with a crease in his trousers! Chimley the exquisite, in whom there was so much less than met the eye, abroad in dirty gloves! Apprehensively I glanced at his collar, but that was spotless. His hair, too, was beautifully pomaded, and there certainly were no wrinkles in his waistcoat. I began to breathe again.

Every few minutes, Gentleman would turn round, as if to address me on some subject of importance, would then apparently think better of it, and retire into his toddy-glass behind the shelter of a platitude. It was not every night that this lordly gentleman, who was well known at the University to be descended, on the father's side, from Adonis, paid me the honour of a visit, and I could only account for his presence in one of three ways. Either he had been plucked again, and wanted sympathy, which I was prepared to

give, or he was screwing his courage up on my whisky to the point of asking the loan of some money, which would have been a more serious matter, or it was girls. With Gentleman it was generally girls; but if that was to be his subject to-night, why was he so unusually shy in beginning? This stupid silence was becoming intolerable, so I threw out a feeler.

"Seen that pretty tobaccoist girl of late?" I asked carelessly.

Chimley actually dropped his toddy-ladle, as an excuse for getting below the table for a moment. When he reappeared with the ladle, his hand trembled so that he had to place both it and his tumbler, on the mantelpiece.

"What pretty tobaccoist girl?" he asked defiantly. "You fellows spend so much time at bars and in tobaccoists' shops, that you seem to think every one is as familiar with the presiding divinities as yourselves."

I whistled gently, and leaving my books and bones, came round to look Chimley senior in the face. The miserable humbug blushed like a school-girl, and hung his head.

"What does this mean, Chimley?" I asked sternly. "You know which of our set is most frequently to be met with in bar-rooms, and as for the presiding divinities, as you call them, I wonder what they would say, if they heard Gentleman Chimley talking in this strain. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"I don't deny," retorted Chimley, "that I had at one time a—slight acquaintance with one or two of them; but Smithson, old man, I've—I've given up all that sort of thing. What are you laughing at?"

"At you—you sweet youth! And when did you turn over this new leaf, and how long is it to be before you turn back again?"

"I've just begun, Smithson, but there is to be no turning back. The fact is, that I consider trifling with barmaids and the like unworthy of a gentleman, and that in future I mean to 'live laborious days,' and pass my 'final' with honours, and all that sort of thing."

"Bravo, my noble Gentleman! let nothing you dismay. But is this remarkable and much-longed-for change in your behaviour, to be traced to the behaviour of the fair Rebecca? I always thought she had a stronger grip of you than the others."

"Rebecca? Others? Sir, what do you mean?" demanded Chimley, trying to brazen it out. But he did not look very defiant.

"Then," I continued remorselessly, "it must be Lucy Rowans, or that cousin of McAinsh's, for I know you have given up Miss Murdoch."

"Smithson," said Gentleman in a low, faltering voice, "those were mere—mere extra little things, but this is a different matter altogether. If you only knew Dimples!"

"Dimples!" I exclaimed, "so it is a new one."

"A new one? New what? I tell you, Smithson, she's the loveliest little girl in the world, and I never cared two straws for a woman, until I met her."

"Remember what you said about Lucy not a month ago."

"Lucy, bah!"

"And Miss Mullins."

"Bah!"

"And McAinsh's cousin, and the girl in the tobacconist's shop in Frederick Street, and Polly Williams, and—

"Bah, man, I say, bah."

"Certainly, bah as much as you like, but you can't get out of it in that way. And who is the new comer? I don't suppose she was christened Dimples."

"Oh! no. That is only my pet name for her."

"Oh! ah! I see. Poor fellow, I feel sorry for you, Chimley. And so she is a little girl this time. The others were biggish as a rule, were they not? Well, well, there's nothing like variety."

"I tell you I never cared twopence for any of the others, man, but Dimples, oh, Smithson!"

I lit my pipe, and listened tranquilly while he raved.

No girl ever had such hair as Dimples. It was brown, the colour of tobacco, so far as I could gather, and Dimples had cut it short, like a boy, and Gentleman had scolded her, and she was letting it grow again.

The eyes of Dimples were as sancers, and when Gentleman looked into them he had a view of another and better world. In colour they were blue, and without pretending to be a poet, Chimley compared them to two inland seas, surrounded by beautiful woods. When I asked him where he got the forests, he explained that he was talking of her eyelashes and her eyebrows.

The nose of Dimples was unique. It was Greek, with just sufficient Roman to give it character, and one of the wonderful things about it was that it was always cold. I said that I had noticed the same peculiarity in dogs, but Chimley did not seem to like it.

But though the ears of Dimples were suggestive of the tiniest shells that are to be picked up on the sea-shore, and her lips were too exquisite to be spoken of, her smile was, upon the whole, the most wonderful thing about Dimples. It was so divine, that it brought tears into Chimley's eyes, and put the very sunshine to shame.

As for the figure of Dimples, Chimley could not describe it to me, because there was nothing in the world that could be compared to it. Gentleman even knew the exact size of her foot, having got it, I suppose, from her bootmaker.

When he had ultimately run down, I found a pipe for Chimley, and we sat by the fire and smoked long after the family of Gowans had retired to rest. There was no speaking however, for I was lost in thought, and Chimley was, no doubt, meditating over Dimples's chin. I had almost forgotten to say that she had the most bewitching little chin that had ever come within the range of Chimley's observation.

Forgetting for the moment that the subject of my thoughts was at my elbow, I at last exclaimed aloud—

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!"

"Eh! what is that you are saying?" asked Chimley starting to his feet and laying down his pipe.

"No offence, Chimley, I—ah—I—hem, of course, I wasn't thinking of you."

"I should think not, indeed. Why, Smithson, I'm the happiest man alive."

"Yes, I know of course you are for the present, but—hang it, there you are misunderstanding me again, Gentleman. What I meant to say,

if you wouldn't snap me up in that offensive way, is that I should like to know Dimples." I said this, meaning to flatter the fellow, but what does he do but get up in a rage at me for daring to talk of the young lady so familiarly.

"You will be so good as to call her Miss Ventnor in my presence at all events," he directed me, and did not even offer to apologize when I reminded him that I had not until now, known what her name was.

We had another pipe, and then Chimley volunteered more news.

"Man," he began sententiously and holding his head very high, "man was not meant to live alone."

"No," I answered, with my pipe in my mouth and determined to agree to whatever poor Chimley said, "he always shows better in company." Gentleman scrutinised me narrowly, as if doubtful whether I were not "chaffing" him. Then he resumed.

"Don't be surprised Smithson, but the fact is, we are engaged!"

I was not at all surprised, and Chimley must have seen it.

"Really engaged, you know," he explained, "not like the other engagements. We are to be married in a week or two."

This looked more serious.

"May I ask," I said, "how long you have known Dimp—I mean, Miss Ventnor?"

"I met her at Mrs. Green's dance last Thursday," answered Chimley defiantly, "and I've seen her every day since."

"Rather smart work, isn't it?"

"Ah, Smithson, you don't understand what a rapid worker love is. He achieves his ends in a moment of time. At ten o'clock you are fancy free; at half past, or even at a quarter past, it may be all up with you."

"So I have been led to understand, indeed, if I remember aright, you told me of this at the time you meditated leading Miss Robbins to the altar."

"Oh, I was a boy then. That was years ago."

"Yes, it was last June."

"There's no use talking to you Smithson. You're such a cynical brute."

"Perhaps, but, by the way, seeing the wedding is on the eve of taking place, you have doubtless dropped a line to your dear parents acquainting them with the state of affairs? They might like to know."

"I mean to write to them on the subject—to-morrow," said Chimley, rising and putting on his coat.

"And Miss Dim—I mean Miss Ventnor's parents?"

"She lives with her aunt."

"Ah, then I suppose the aunt is to be told—to-morrow, too?"

"Certainly; is there anything else you would like to know?"

"Well, seeing you are so obliging, Chimley, I venture to ask whether you mean to continue your studies at the university after the—hum—the wedding has taken place, also whether you have yet taken a nice little villa, also"—

Here Gentleman interposed anxiously.

"That reminds me, Smithson, of the only point on which Dimples and I have disagreed. The house I mean. You see she would like enough

garden to grow our own vegetables, while I think a house in a street, with a main door, of course—"

"Heaven help you, Gentleman" I said, putting his hat on his head and leading him gently to the door, "for I see you are too far gone for me!"

I lit a match and gave it to him to guide him downstairs, but he neglected it so completely for Dimples, that it indignantly went out. When he had got half way down, he stopped and called to me.

"Smithson, I don't think I told you about her hands."

"Yes you did. Good night."

"Did I tell you that her chin—"

"Yes, yes; oh, go home to bed!"

I slammed the door, and was putting on the chain, when I heard the unfortunate wretch re-ascending the stair.

"Are you there, Smithson?" he whispered through the keyhole.

"I'm here," I answered, "but I don't mean to open the door again."

"That is all right. I don't want you to, but it has just struck me, that when you meet Dimples you needn't say anything about—about the others, you know. She might take it up wrong you see, and that might lead to trouble."

"So it might, Chimley, but you may depend on me. Good night."

So saying I retired to my room to smoke Dimples's hair and drink her smile, and sometimes I caught myself saying "Poor Dimples!" and at other times "Poor Chimley,"

CHAPTER II.

A RAY OF HOPE.

Two weeks passed, during which time my eyes were never allowed the privilege of feasting themselves on Gentleman Chimley's fair exterior. Strictly speaking, he should have been in attendance at the same lectures as myself every day; but in winter the class-rooms were too cold for Chimley senior, and in summer they were too hot. Had it not been for this unfortunate circumstance, and for his fatal habit of falling asleep when he opened a book, it was generally believed that he might have been a diligent and even brilliant student.

As it was, he manfully resigned himself to his fate, and appeased a conscience that was not especially lively, by looking in at a class-room door occasionally, when he chanced to be passing that way.

Gentleman had been plucked oftener than any other man of his year, but as he happened to know that the professors had a spite against him, he bore the misfortune with a Christian fortitude. When pressed on the subject of plucking, he hinted that he rather liked it than otherwise, though it tended to become monotonous.

It soon became known in our "set" that poor Chimley had "gone wrong" again, that being the recognized phrase for love-making, and he was not treated with that consideration which his perilous condition seemed to call for.

When McAinsh was informed that Gentleman was "engaged," he brutally remarked in the poor wretch's hearing that it "served him right;" and Jennie, who, despite his name, was of the mascu-

line gender, requested to be immediately informed when Gentleman was not engaged, but not to be told when he was. That Chimley senior was engaged nine months in the twelve, was accepted as a matter of course; but for all that, it was perhaps rather cruel to talk of the only girl he ever loved, as his *pro tem*.

"There go Chimley and his latest temporary engagement," Jennie is reported to have remarked on passing the betailed Gentleman in Princes Street, with the beautiful Dimples on his arm.

"Lost in admiration of each other," added Sandilands.

"No, of Chimley," corrected Jennie.

I was not of the company, however, and thus missed my opportunity of meeting the lady who had at last taken permanent possession of Gentleman's capacious heart.

"So you have seen Gentleman's 'blue-eyed darling?'" I remarked to Jennie one night when he had assailed my fortress in search of tobacco and company. Be it parenthetically observed that Chimley had rashly admitted, under the influence of beer, that Dimples was his "blue-eyed darling."

From that time, when his hard-hearted friends referred to the "blue-eyed darling," they sometimes were speaking of Dimples and sometimes of Dimples's lover. I was above all that sort of thing, but for the moment their evil communications would corrupt my unexceptionable manners.

"Yes," Jennie admitted. "Sandilands and I passed them in Princes Street, but the contemptible cad did not offer to introduce us. As if we wanted to know his precious Dimples!"

"Looked a very loving couple, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes; sickeningly so."

"Pretty girl?"

"Ya-as, rather."

"Gentleman says she's the bonniest wee lassie that ever covered her wings with sealskin, and pretended she was not more than human."

Jennie sneered.

"Very likely; but then Gentleman does not know a pretty girl when he sees one."

"Hum" I said, "it's the one subject I give Gentleman credit for being able to pass an examination in."

Jennie removed his legs from the table and rested his feet gracefully, yet with a certain ease, upon the mantelpiece.

"You're rather a duffer, Smithson," he remarked in his engaging way, "but though you're certainly not the kind of man for a girl to fall in love with; I think you have sufficient sense to admit that there are different styles of women."

"Quite so."

"For instance," continued Jennie, warming to the discussion, and perhaps forgetting that I was not a debating society; "there is the fine woman! Now, what do we mean by a fine woman?"

Jennie intended answering this question himself, but I was too smart for him.

"Well, every one knows what a fine woman is. A fine woman is a handsome woman, and a handsome woman is, well, a handsome woman is biggish, and carries her head high and thinks a deal of herself—"

"Oh, they all do that. It is the badge of the sex."

"Then the handsome woman is manly rather,

and sometimes carries a walking stick; and her hair and eyes are usually black, and she has a temper. As for her—well, of course—and so on—that, in a word, is what we mean by a fine woman."

"Can't say I admire your definitions, young man, but then, I never did. However, we may for the moment accept that as an imperfect description of the species, fine woman. Let us now turn our attention to the species, little girl. Broadly speaking, all physically beautiful women—and there are none I need hardly remark, morally beautiful—fall under one or other of these two heads. The little girl is, or ought to be, a blonde with pretty baby ways—all simulated—the smaller she is, the more dangerous, and she goes through the various stages of the defiant, the humble, the soothing, the sweet and soft, the sour and hard, the fascinating and the maddening quicker than if she were an express train. When you meet her first, she is all sunshine and looks as if she would gladly die if you would let her do it in your arms; but once she feels she has a grip of you, she is as cruel as the grave. 'Ware mad dogs and little girls."

"I am told." I said diffidently, "that all little girls are shallow-brained and deceptive."

"Yes: and that is also a distinguishing feature of the fine woman."

"Well, one satisfactory thing for Chimley is that as Dimples is a little thing, she will be the more easily kept in order."

"You are a simpleton, Smithson. Why the whole strength of a woman lies in her weakness; but what I was going to say is that Gentleman only showed his ignorance of the sex when he called Dimples a wee lassie. She's what I call a very fine woman."

I took my pipe out of my mouth, and looked anxiously at Jennie. There seemed something wrong here.

"Hair the colour of tobacco," I explained, but interrogatively, "eyes large and blue: feet barely visible to the naked eye, hands the size of a child's, figure rounded but *petite*, general effect, that of an infant in her mothers frock?"

"Fudge, man, 'that isn't Dimples at all. You must be thinking of some other person. Hair black, eyes also dark, figure tall and commanding, hands and feet in proportion, general effect, that of a young gentleman masquerading in his sisters clothes."

If I had not with singular presence of mind lifted my tumbler to my lips, I am under the impression that I should there and then have fainted.

"Jennie," I said sadly, "it seems to me that there is more in this than meets the eye. It wasn't Dimples that you saw with Chimley."

"Perhaps not. I only supposed it was from what you said. How long is it since the deceiver unburdened himself to you?"

"Let me see. It must be nearly three weeks, I should think."

"Three weeks! Bless you, Smithson, Chimley will have forgotten whether it was Dimples or Pimples he called her, by this time. He changes them fortnightly—with his neck-ties."

I groaned, but I could say no more. The suspicion of Gentleman's faithlessness to Dimples, had come upon me with crushing effect.

"You are quite sure she wasn't a little girl," I said to Jennie, when he finally intimated his intention of departing.

"A little girl," answered the experienced cynic grimly. "Certainly not; she was a very fine woman."

CHAPTER III.

'T WAS EVER THUS.

"A lady asking for me, Mrs. Gowans? Bless me, that is very extraordinary."

Involuntarily my hand went up to my necktie. The old one, of course. Just my luck!

In her excitement Mrs. Gowans had allowed half of her body to follow her head into the room. That, too, was extraordinary. She now looked at me suspiciously, as who should say I was not acting positively on the square.

But I was. A lady! And the shades of night were beginning to fall. Smithson, Smithson, you dog, who would have thought it of you? It is a miserable confession to have to make, but I swear that I trembled so, that Mrs. Gowans could hardly hear me tell her to show the young lady in. Young lady? Did my landlady say she was young though?

Pull yourself together, Smithson. She comes, she comes. Listen to her foot in the passage. What a contrast to the tread of Mrs. Gowans! The lamb frisking at my door with an elephant. The door was opened by my landlady, who shoved something inside and banged it to. Like all good women, Mrs. Gowans was suspicious of her sisters.

Sisters, did I say? Of course I meant daughters, granddaughters, great granddaughters.

"How do you do?" I said politely, advancing to shake hands with my visitor and stopping half way. "Is there anything I can do for you—I mean won't you chake a tair,—tuts—take a chair?"

I paused here, under the impression that it was now time for her to take a share in the conversation.

She turned her eyes on me, and the effect was as when in a dark room you turn up the gas.

Then she smiled, and with the greatest self-possession I got to the other side of the table. Otherwise, there is no doubt I would have kissed her at once. All that doth become a man I dare do, but one must draw the line somewhere.

"I know," she faltered, "you must think it very rude in me to come here in this unexpected manner—but Mr.—Mr. Chimley—you are his friend, and—and—"

Of course it was Dimples; instinct had told me so from the first, or if not instinct, the tobacco-coloured hair and the saucer eyes and the nose that was unique.

Merciful heavens! it was Dimples, and her eyes were full of tears—blessed tears!

I saw it all. That mean, low-minded, fickle, contemptible cad, Gentleman Chimley, had been seen with his "fine woman" by others than Jennie, and this poor little girl was broken-hearted. She had heard Chimley speak of me as his friend (henceforth, Chimley senior, we are strangers), and had come to make me the receptacle of her woes. What could be more natural? Nothing. We would grieve together over the faithlessness of this wretch, who was not fit to be a Raleigh's cloak to the sweet little angel; we would hold each other's hands and sob, or she would sob and

I would hold her hand. I would wipe the pretty tears away when they bubbled over the saucers' edge; we would be to each other as brother and sister, and Dimples would sob herself to rest on my sympathetic bosom.

"Surprised to see you, Miss Dim—I mean Miss Ventnor!" I exclaimed in an aggrieved tone. "On the contrary, I am not only very delighted to have the honour of this visit from you, but understand well why you have seen fit to make it. Dimp—ah—now, Miss Ventnor, I know all, everything, and entirely approve of your procedure. What will you have to drink?"

My luck again! Of course I should never have asked her that, but she was the only representative of her sex who had visited me for months, and it was such a natural question. It was what I always said after I had shaken hands with my male visitors, and they always took it as a matter of course.

I have already said that Dimples was an angel, and here is the proof of it, though if you had seen her, you would never have thought of asking for proof. Well, instead of starting to her little feet, drawing up her little body to its full height—I don't know how many inches high Dimples was—and saying "Sir!"—which is what your fine women would have done—she smiled through her tears, told me I was very kind, and said that as she had run part of the way, she would like a glass of water.

Water! For the moment I could not remember what it was. It had never been asked for in my rooms before, but I knew it was used for other than drinking purposes.

Dimples got her water, which she sipped daintily, as if afraid to intoxicate herself, looking at me the while over the top of her tumbler with a trusting, childish gaze that was either very artful or very simple, or both.

"If you know all, Mr. Smithson," she said eagerly, "you do not require to be told why I came to see you. I was so afraid you would think me dreadful."

I smiled. The idea of any one's thinking Dimples dreadful, was provocative of mirth.

"Yes, I know everything," I answered confidently, "and I can assure you that if any words of mine will bring the cowardly, woefully blind, and utterly caddish Chimley to his senses——"

Dimples pulled her handkerchief from her pocket.

"Oh, please don't call dear Gentleman names!" she exclaimed, quivering with emotion.

Dear Gentleman! Could it be that I was on the wrong tack?

"Can it be?" I asked her sadly, "that you love him after this (after what, I hadn't the least idea, but one had to say something) as much as ever?"

"Oh," she moaned, "I like him very much as a brother, you know; but he—he loves me madly; and I—I thought I loved him, and now I find that Mr.—Mr. Barbour is the man I really love, and I'm very miserable. I know I'm going to die!"

So after all it was six of the one and half a dozen of the other! Gentleman Chimley was to get a Roland for his Oliver.

If Dimples had not been such a little thing, I would have put her out of the house. As it was,

I shook my head at her and tried to think of a suitable Biblical quotation.

"So I am to understand," I said severely, "that you are now desirous that your engagement with my friend, Mr. Chimley, should come to an end? Furthermore, that I am requested to break the news to him?"

"You know that it was all a mistake," faltered Dimples. "I really thought I loved him at the time."

"Hum," I said grimly. "I hardly think that can be looked upon as an extenuating circumstance."

"I know I'm very wicked," Dimples answered, with considerable cheerfulness.

"And have you fully considered," I asked sternly, "what may be the effect of this announcement upon the sensitive nature of my dear and much valued friend, Chimley? Ah, Miss Ventnor, when I think of that proud and loving spirit crushed to the dust by the fell announcement, I admit that I take upon me the duty of disclosing your sentiments to him with a strange repugnance."

For an extempore thing, I thought it rather pretty at the time, and it had a great effect on Dimples.

"It will kill him," she cried wildly, "it will kill him! Oh, how I wish I was in my grave!"

"No," I said calmly, "it will not kill him. But the effect will be terrible and lasting. The Chimley of the present is a bright merry youth of various parts, on whom the sun has so far shone with unwonted brightness. Henceforth that sun will be behind a cloud. The nature of Gentleman is trustful, he has no experience of deceit, he has always looked upon the world as a scene of happiness and honour and virtue. Such was the Chimley of yesterday. The Chimley of to-morrow will be a recluse, a misanthrope; he will hate the sight of his fellow-creatures; he will fly to some distant clime to lead a solitary life and brood over the days that are no more, and the girl that enticed him to his doom. Ah, Dimples, Dimples" (in the hurry and excitement I thought I would risk it, and she never noticed), "a terrible responsibility rests on the shoulders of the girl who wins for herself a good man's love, and then flings it at his feet. Chimley is not a man to give his affection lightly to any woman, but once she has it, it is hers for ever. I, his friend, know that you were the only girl he ever loved."

How I wished I could have put it on like that at the Debating Society. Here was real eloquence. Poor Dimples! no wonder the tears were streaming down her cheeks. I was almost crying myself.

"I know it, I know it!" she exclaimed, in a heart-broken voice, "dear, dear Gentleman, he told me himself that he had never looked at any girl until he met me."

"He did—the miserable liar!" I ejaculated, though Dimples did not catch my words.

After that I had no more pity for Chimley; I assured Dimples that I would make it all right; and when I parted with her at her aunt's door, where I had insisted on conveying her, the only person in the world I really loathed was Mr. Barbour.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVED.

"The question," said Gentleman Chimley, thoughtfully, after he had given me a piece of his mind for not being able to supply him with cigars, "the question is, can a man be engaged to two girls at once?"

"He can, but he oughtn't," I answered briefly. Evidently, Gentleman was coming rapidly to the point.

It was the day following that on which I had been visited by Dimples, and Chimley had walked into my parlour without being sent for. I had not broached the little matter of the engagement, however, and the last thing in the world that Chimley could have been thinking of was, that the bonny head of Dimples had a few hours before graced the back of the chair in which he now elegantly sprawled.

"I don't see that at all," he answered, anxiously.

"A man," I said, magisterially, "has no more right to have two sweethearts than to have two wives."

"On the contrary," retorted Chimley, who had evidently been thinking the matter out, "a man has as much right to have two sweethearts, as to have two coats."

The argument was too poor to call for answer, so I smoked on in silence.

"I have an idea," said Gentleman, nervously, "that a few weeks ago I mentioned—in the course of conversation—that I had made the acquaintance of a Miss Ventnor."

"I calculate that is so," I answered, amazed at Chimley's audacity; "and not only that. You also mentioned in the course of conversation that she was the only girl you ever loved, that you were engaged, and that the wedding was only being deferred until you had fixed upon a suitable house."

I spoke in cold measured tones, and Gentleman saw that the game was up. He laid down his pipe, crossed his legs, uncrossed them again, and tried to look the image of despair.

"Smithson," he said, "since we came up to college, you and I have been more like brothers than mere friends. That being so, I come to you in my hour of trouble, asking for that sympathy and assistance which I know you are so ready to give."

The hypocrite!

"I don't know what you are talking about," I replied, though I had really a very fair idea.

"Dimples," said Gentleman tragically, "Dimples will be the death of me!"

"How?" I asked innocently, "has she jilted you?"

"Jilted me? No, indeed! The dear little woman is as true as steel; but the fact is, Smithson, that when I saw you last I misunderstood my feelings. I shall always feel like a brother to Dimples; but as for marriage, you see Smithson—well, marriage is a serious matter; and—and I'm not through my exams yet."

Chimley's eloquence failed him here, and I kindly came to the rescue.

"And you were seen in Princes street the other day with another one!"

Chimley blushed.

"That was Katie," he said, "but I only met her by accident; and dash it all, a fellow can't give up speaking to every girl he knows because he is engaged. What are you grinning there for?"

"But what is it you want me to do," I asked.

"Well, seeing that you and I are such old friends, and that it would be rather awkward for me to explain how things are—she is such an impulsive thing, too—I thought you might call and tell her that though I shall never forget her; shall, indeed, always think of her with feelings of affection; yet this is a cruel world, and it seems better on the whole that we should not meet again."

Gentleman Chimley tried to look like a man as he spoke, but with scant success. The opportunity, however, was a glorious one for me. I rose, and stood upon the hearthrug.

"Gentleman, Gentleman," I said solemnly, "and has it come to this? You make use of all your arts to draw an innocent little girl into an attachment for you; you twist yourself round her very heart, the mention of your name makes her blush, your footstep is rapture, her heart beats as she looks upon you approaching her door; in you she lives and moves, and has her being. And then when she is head over ears in love with you, and feels that life is only fair because of your love for her, you fling her over. Gentleman, I'm ashamed of you; I wash my hands of you; get thee hence, away, away!"

Chimley groaned.

"Go on," he said, "don't spare me, I deserve it all. I'm a brute—I know it—a cur, and shall never get over the shock. I'm the only man she cared two straws for, and I have all her girlish affection. She hasn't even a fraction of love to give to any other person. She told me so herself."

"The lying little baggage!" I inwardly exclaimed. But I was not yet done with Chimley. He was now playing mouse to my cat.

"But let us," I reasoned, "put aside the fact that your heartless desertion will probably break Dimples's heart; and there are still other considerations to be taken into account. Has it ever struck you, friend Chimley, that there is such a thing as breach of promise?"

Gentleman moved uneasily in his chair.

"She's not the sort of girl to bring a fellow up," he murmured, but somewhat apprehensively.

"That's all you know, Chimley. I'm sorry to alarm you, but I was talking over the subject with Jennie lately, and we both came to the conclusion that the smaller the girl the more dangerous."

Chimley groaned.

"And what is more," I continued, "I happen to have a friend, a lawyer, who is fond of gathering statistics, and he tells me that rather more than seventy per cent. of the breach of promise cases are instituted by little women with light brown hair and big eyes. They have a way of getting round juries that is simply incredible, especially if they cry easily. For your sake, Gentleman, I earnestly hope that Dimples isn't the kind of girl whose eyes fill readily with tears. That means another five hundred pounds to the damages."

"Oh, Smithson!" poor Chimley groaned, "it's all up with me! That is exactly the sort of girl she is."

"I'm afraid it is a bad case, then," I said slowly, "but you mustn't break down in this way, Gentleman. I'll call upon Dimples with pleasure—I

mean I shall render you what assistance I can give with pleasure; and if the worst comes to the worst, I daresay your father will tide you through your difficulty. It will hardly be a matter of over a thousand pounds, exclusive of expenses."

Poor, broken-down Chimley! I had to take him home.

I did call on Dimples, and I remained to lunch, but all I told her was that I thought Chimley would forgive her in time. I told Gentleman I had interviewed Dimples, and that though she was terribly upset, there seemed a possibility of her recovering. Thus it was, that nearly a whole month elapsed before the two met at the house of a friend. They were exceedingly polite; but when they parted they looked fixedly into each other's eyes, and there read many things that were unseen by the vulgar.

"Dear Gentleman," murmured Dimples to her looking-glass, "how he loves me! Will he never forget?"

Then she put her ruffles right, and returned to the drawing-room.

"Poor little girl," said Chimley, as he descended the stairs, "I'm afraid she has been hard hit. I must be more careful."

SONNET.

A DESIRE.

RELENTLESS Time! clutch not upon my life
Greedily if my lips would troll a song,
Or my feet pause that all this human throng
Jostling may pass. I weary with the strife
That bruises me, and sharpened to a knife,
Slays all the angels of my thought. Along
The cool lanes let me travel, and among
The murmuring arcades of the woodlands, rife
With voices musical; to meadows hie
And watch the barefoot peasant children smell
Sweet cowslip, daisy, and the shy hare-bell;
Leave me, I pray thee, under that red sky,
And for one little hour so let me dwell,
Forgetful of the world a-tossing by!

BERNARD WELLER.

POOR SURGEON MCPHEE, R.N.

(A NAVY SKETCH.)

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

TALK about extremes meeting—they certainly did meet when Fleet Surgeon McKoy and Surgeon McPhee shook hands for the first time down in the ward-room mess of the old *Dockem-short*, quondam flag-ship at the warlike port of Sheerness. For McPhee was a tall and brawny Scot, with a fist that he used to drive nails with when he was his farmer-father's best man on the "harvest-rig;" while his chief—McPhee having come to join the ship as junior—was a little, fussy, self-important, dark, button-nosed Irishman, who was reputed professionally clever because he had once cured an Admiral of the jaundice. He gave himself very great airs, did this wee wee man; but he was not a favourite in the

mess, albeit he did all he could to keep up the dignity of the service.

The first lieutenant didn't like him, because he gave himself such airs; the captain of Marines, because he—McKoy—was not sociable, and didn't smoke; the paymaster wholly and solely on account of his button-nose—this was hardly fair; and the navigating lieutenant could give no reason at all for his dislike. But he used to say at times, when McKoy's absence permitted him to do so—

I do not like thee Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell,
But I do not like thee Dr. Fell.

McPhee hadn't been five days in the mess before he had made himself a general favourite. He was jolly and genial, laughed at other people's jokes, listened to other people's conversation, laughed when telling a good story himself, or when cracking a joke, which was excusable, seeing that they made every one else laugh. McPhee—as I call him; he is still afloat—had, I believe, a kindly heart of his own, and I suppose thought every body else should have the same, so he considered it pretty hard lines when wee McKoy began to keep him down, but I don't think McKoy liked him from the first night. I was there on that first night, and I'm not likely ever to forget it. McPhee made himself most perfectly at home; he was in fine form, and fine physique; he had come from Glasgow that very day. And he was on the very best of terms with himself, and was not even over-awed by the presence of the captain, who happened to be dining that evening in the ward-room—but he ought to have been so, being a stranger and a young man. The best of the fun was that McPhee pretended that night, he could speak nothing but Scotch, and he did speak nothing else. The very first words he gave utterance to startled the table, and held it spell-bound for a few seconds. They were addressed to the steward, who was bending politely over his shoulder and whispering—

"Soup, sir."
"What has ye?" said McPhee. He didn't whisper. "Eh? What?" "Weel, I'll tak mulligetawny."

The captain, who was Scotch, tittered, the commander, one of the best fellows that ever drew a sword, looked amused, and the steward made a sly effort to swallow half a yard of his spotless napkin.

The captain rather drew McPhee out after this; it was not a difficult operation, droll remark followed droll remark, good thing after good thing rattled in "their ranks," but all couched in the broadest Doric. I may say with truth that the whole of that evening McPhee had possession of the table, and kept it in a roar, even the messman had to get behind the curtain and laugh till he split his best waistcoat.

The captain himself, honest man, forgot all his dignity and all the dignity of the service. He at one time fairly exploded, all the table followed suit, and such laughing and cheering and rattling of glasses, I never heard before in the service.

I ought to say, however, that in not one iota of etiquette, either as regards the service or his status as a gentleman, did McPhee fail that night. But he stuck to the Doric.

Well, if next morning his messmates expected to hear McPhee speaking Scotch, they were dis-

appointed. The young surgeon was calm and dignified, and his English was faultless even in accent.

It was evident then that the Doric of the previous evening was only McPhee's little joke, and everybody took it in right good part except McKoy. He tossed his button-nose, and remarked that it was questionable sport, to say the least of it, and that he for one did not like to be made a fool of.

There was no Doric at table that evening, but for all that no one forgot the fun they had had, and often when guests were invited who knew not McPhee, the brother officers of that young officer would gather around him and say:

"Oh! I say McPhee, old man, we want to get some roaring fun to-night. Captain So-and-so, or Adjutant Thingummy is coming off; can we have a Scotch night? Are you in form?"

"In form," McPhee would reply, "to be sure, and I'll be delighted to air my native tongue."

Then when the guests came off they would be told about the broad Scotch doctor, who couldn't speak a word of English to save his life.

There seemed to be no end to McPhee's funny sayings and stories on nights like these, but he never, unless asked, repeated any of his previous yarns, nor told the same one twice over. Every "Scotch night" was complete in itself, and perfectly original, so that his own messmates had as much amusement as the guests.

Now we sailor officers are, as a rule, far more free and easy than soldiers. We do not give ourselves so many airs, we seldom mouth our English, we speak straight out; we seldom lisp, and we don't er—hah—er—our sentences—er—languish—don't you know? But many soldiers do.

Rutter of the *Dockenshort* met Surgeon McPhee one day on shore, and rushed up to him.

"Glad I've met you," he cried. "Just on the way to the barracks to say 'how do?' to an old friend or rather acquaintance of mine. Met him out at the Cape. A regular stuck-up dandy. Immaculate in every way. Couldn't pick his glove up if he dropped it without an accident to his lower garments. Come on."

"Precisely the sort of man," replied McPhee, "that I don't care to meet."

"Oh! but I do care you should meet him; he's coming off next guest-night, and I want you to give us a Scotch night."

"Shan't," said McPhee doggedly; "these Scotch nights are getting irksome."

"Never."

"But they are to me."

"I sha'n't have a refusal, I can tell you, Mister Sandy Sawbones. I tell you that on Thursdays next you must give us 'a nicht wi' Burns.'"

This allusion to his favourite bard softened McPhee.

He smiled, and next moment Rutter and he were going arm in arm towards the barracks.

They found the mess room empty, except for the presence of the officer they had come to visit. This gentleman was standing with his back to the mantelpiece. He stuck his eyeglass under his brow as Rutter and his companion—both in multi-entered, and stared for two seconds and three quarters before he spoke. This was meant to be impressive.

Then he pulled out his watch and looked at it.

"Six minutes late, Ruttaw," he drawled; "just like a sailow, keeping a fellah waiting."

"Here we are at last, anyhow," cried Rutter, not troubling to make any apology. "Let me introduce you two friends. Dr. McPhee—Captain Augustus Hans de Haw-Haw. The Haw-Haw with a hyphen. There you are."

This was offhand, anyhow.

"Delighted, I'm sure," said Haw-Haw, approaching two white fingers to meet the grasp of that brown nail-driver of McPhee's. McPhee gave him the grip cordial. Haw-Haw winced and started, and the eyeglass dropped.

"Hoo's a' wi' ye?" said McPhee.

The eyeglass went up again, and Haw-Haw looked at Rutter in some astonishment, then drew slightly aside. He said to Rutter, as soon as McPhee had gone—

"Isn't—er—your friend—er—somewhat vulgar?"

"Right good fellow," said Rutter, with emphasis; "but speaks—er—broad English."

"English you call it?" said Augustus Hans de Haw-Haw. "I should—er—call it something else, don't you know?"

McPhee did give them "a nicht wi' Burns." McPhee was in first-rate form, and even Augustus Hans was often obliged to smile at his drolleries. Once or twice, indeed, he complimented McPhee by saying—

"Oh, weally now—er—I wish you wouldn't."

The truth is, Augustus Hans de Haw-Haw wore stays, a corset in fact, and if he had had to laugh, there would have been a catastrophé.

In the course of dessert the subject of dancing was mooted, and McPhee was loud in praise of the Scottish reel, the Highland fling, and Ghillie Callum; the English waltz he characterised as—

"No dancin' ara"—a wheen half-naked lassies and chieles wi' tail-coats and ticht troosers whirlin' roun' the room to music, slow and solemn enouch to kill a coo. But look at a reel, look how the lads fling their houghs, and listen to their hearty hoochs! Or tak' Ghillie Callum itsel' noo."

Here the doctor paused and glanced over his shoulder at the deck.

"What are you looking for, McPhee?" cried the commander.

"Man!" he replied, "if I had but the poker and the taings, I'd —"

"You'll have my sword," from one end of the table.

"And mine," from the other.

"Out with them," cried McPhee. "Hooch! Hurrah! Steward, tell the band to play the Hielan Laddie."

The band had been practising this very tune all the forenoon, for it is needless to say this part of the evening performance had been pre-arranged.

Much to Augustus Hans surprise, McPhee pulled his boots off. The swords were placed, the band struck up, everybody was on foot, standing even on lockers and chairs, the very sentry peeped in from behind the curtain, such a scene and such a performance had seldom been witnessed before in the ward-room of a flag-ship in the Royal Navy. It was perfect in *se*, and wildly encored. But Ghillie Callum—the sword dance—as my Scotch readers know, is one of those things that if well done, and carried out to twelve steps, the *finalé* furious, won't respond to any encore, without an interval for pulmonary refreshment.

As he was undressing himself that night,

Augustus Hans de Haw-Haw said to his looking-glass—

"The next time I dine with that extraordinary fellow I shan't wear my corset."

But Augustus Hans met a quiet, calm, dignified English speaking gentleman at a picnic some days afterwards. It was McPhee. And Augustus Hans had more need of his eye-glass than ever.

No, McKoy did *not* like McPhee from the first, and in about a month's time he began to hate him. McPhee didn't mind it much, though it was sometimes annoying to have to stop on board on lovely summer evenings, when he would have much preferred being walking round Minster. But McKoy had a wife on shore—sick she was—and lived on shore. McPhee hadn't, and lived on board, and there is a standing order in the service that if there be two surgeons on a ship in harbour, one of these is to be found on board at all times.

So poor McPhee had to be content, for the most part, with looking at the shore a long way off, as Moses did at the promised land.

Sometimes McPhee's afternoon life was rendered a little less monotonous, by the arrival of the *Princess Alice*—the ship I mean, she was then afloat—bringing a gay company of lads and lasses—with an Admiralty order to permit them to dance on board the *Dockemshore*. They brought their own music and their own wine, and sentries had to be doubled to prevent them from making the sailors drunk. But on the whole these afternoons were enjoyable enough to McPhee.

The more McPhee didn't seem to mind McKoy's ungentlemanly treatment of him, the more McKoy tried to annoy and badger him.

In the sick bay—listen to this, intending candidates for medical commissions in the Royal Navy—McKoy did not deign to consult with his junior, but treated him as a dresser, a nurse or hospital clerk. So while his superior officer was asking questions of a patient, and taking the bearings of a case, McPhee had to sit on one side and try to look as dignified or as indifferent as the circumstances would permit of.

Little McKoy pretended to have a very deep insight into all the mysteries of his profession. He could hear, or pretended he could, the beating of a man's heart during general quarters, if he only put the stethoscope to his chest, or vesicular breathing, when the men were holystoning decks. He was very learned.

He kept about five-and-twenty men on the sick list on board ship, although the splendid naval hospital of Chatham was only a few miles up stream. But whenever McKoy went away on leave McPhee let the men have the benefit of the little man's absence, and reaped the benefit himself, for he cleared the ship of patients, *then* he could smoke the pipe of peace and go on shore when he pleased.

Yes, Fleet Surgeon McKoy very often went on leave—whenever he could in fact. But he managed most effectually to spoil poor McPhee's leave going. Whenever the latter wanted to go for a week's spell, his chief wanted to go himself. The down-trodden worm turned at last; McPhee spoke his mind one evening to McKoy on the main deck. McKoy was furious. He stamped and raved, pacing up and down all the time like a caged monkey, and

turning so quickly that his frock-coat tails flew over his head and nearly knocked his cap off. McPhee said too much. Though he talked quietly his words were bitter and to the point. Too much so, because when a junior surgeon threatens to pick his chief up by the back of the neck and drop him into the engine-room, it becomes a court-martial case. Several men heard the quarrel, besides the sentry.

Next day McPhee was reported and planked before his captain; very disconsolate he looked, as he left his cabin to go on deck. He was ruined. He felt he was. But just at the foot of the ladder a boy handed him a morsel of paper. On it were the words—"Make the doctor bring witnesses."

Hope sprang up in McPhee's breast. When accused, he simply turned to his captain, and said, quietly—

"Dr. McKoy has, no doubt, witnesses?"

To be sure he had, and they were all brought up. McKoy tried them every way. They knew nothing; they had heard nothing.

So McKoy lost his case, and looked very foolish. But he also looked very black.

He told McPhee that same evening that his (McPhee's) time in the flag-ship was drawing to a close; that he (McKoy) could compass that.

Some time after the junior surgeon told his chief he had the commander's permission to go on a week's leave.

"By George!" said he of the button-nose, "you sha'n't have it. I go on shore at two o'clock, and I'll see the captain. Two of us can't leave the ship. Ha, ha, ha! I shall ask a week's leave of the captain. Ho, ho!"

Now, although McPhee had quite made up his mind to have this week's leave, he made no sort of complaint. But it touched the honest commander's heart to see him standing quietly, but sadly, by the gangway, as the boat was about to shove off.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Jump in McPhee; I'll be responsible."

It was now evident to every officer in the boat that a race was on—a race for leave. The captain's house was about three hundred yards from the steps; the road lay through the dockyard. Whispered bets were made freely, the odds being in favour of the "young 'un." But the navigating lieutenant, who was steering, so managed the landing, that McKoy got out first, was up the steps, and across the bridge, ere McPhee started. This was only fair.

"Go it, ye devils!" cried the paymaster, as the race began in earnest. "Hurrah!" cried some one else.

McPhee soon caught his senior up, but his senior put on the spurt; so on they went, neck and neck—madly, wildly, leaping over coils of rope, jumping over spars. The dockyard maties stopped work and stared, the stolid policeman gaped aghast. Somebody, they thought, must be very ill indeed before doctors would run like this. They were neck and neck when a hundred yards from the captain's door. Then wind told, and McKoy fell behind. McPhee rang the captain's bell, then rushed boldly in without waiting for an answer; and so, when McKoy came up, panting, with one hand on his heart, it was only to be told that McPhee had secured, not a week, but a fortnight's leave.

But who ever succeeded well in this life who kicked against the pricks?

McKoy, as soon as he got a chance, visited the great medical chief at Somerset House, and one week after that down came poor McPhee's appointment to a foreign station.

The last thing he heard was the band playing his favourite "Farewell to Lochaber." The last thing he saw was he of the button-nose standing, grinning, on the pier.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

ON GETTING ON IN THE WORLD.

NOT exactly the sort of thing for an idle fellow to think about, is it? But outsiders, you know, often see most of the game; and, sitting in my arbour by the wayside, smoking my hookah of contentment, and eating the sweet lotus-leaves of indolence, I can look out musingly upon the whirling throng that rolls and tumbles past me on the great high road of life.

Never-ending is the wild procession. Day and night you can hear the quick tramp of the myriad feet—some running, some walking, some halting and lame; but all hastening, all eager in the feverish race; all straining life and limb and heart and soul to reach the ever-receding horizon of success.

Mark them as they surge along—men and women, old and young, gentle and simple, fair and foul, rich and poor, merry and sad—all hurrying, bustling, scrambling. The strong pushing aside the weak, the cunning creeping past the foolish; those behind elbowing those before; those in front kicking, as they run, at those behind. Look close, and see the fitting show! Here is an old man panting for breath; and there a timid maiden, driven by a hard and sharp-faced matron; here is a studious youth, reading "How to get on in the World," and letting everybody pass him as he stumbles along with his eyes on his book; here is a bored-looking man, with a fashionably-dressed woman jogging his elbow; here a boy, gazing wistfully back at the sunny village that he never again will see; here, with firm and easy step, strides a broad-shouldered man; and here, with stealthy tread, a thin-faced, stooping fellow dodges and shuffles upon his way; here, with gaze fixed always on the ground, an artful rogue carefully works his way from side to side of the road, and thinks he is going forward; and here a youth with a noble face stands, hesitating as he looks from the distant goal to the mud beneath his feet.

And now into sight comes a fair girl, with her dainty face growing more wrinkled at every step; and now a careworn man, and now a hopeful lad.

A motley throng—a motley throng! Prince and beggar, sinner and saint, butcher and baker and candlestick-maker, tinkers and tailors, and ploughboys and sailors—all jostling along together. Here the counsel in his wig and gown,

and here the old Jew clothesman under his dingy tiara; here the soldier in his scarlet, and here the undertaker's mute in streaming hat-band and worn cotton gloves; here the musty scholar, fumbling his faded leaves, and here the scented actor, dangling his showy seals. Here the glib politician, crying his legislative panaceas; and here the peripatetic Cheap-Jack, holding aloft his quack cures for human ills. Here the sleek capitalist, and there the sinewy labourer; here the man of science, and here the shoeblack, here the poet, and here the water-rate collector; here the Cabinet Minister, and there the ballet-dancer. Here a red-nosed publican, shouting the praises of his vats; and here a temperance lecturer; here a judge, and there a swindler; here a priest, and there a gambler. Here a jewelled duchess, smiling and gracious; here a thin lodging-house keeper, irritable with cooking; and here a wabbling, strutting thing, tawdry in paint and finery.

Cheek by cheek, they struggle onward. Screaming, cursing, and praying, laughing, singing, and moaning, they rush past side by side. Their speed never slackens, the race never ends. There is no wayside rest for them, no halt by cooling fountains, no pause beneath green shades. On, on, on—on through the heat and the crowd and the dust—on, or they will be trampled down, and lost—on, with whirling brain and tottering limbs—on, till the heart grows sick, and the eyes grow blurred, and a gurgling groan tells those behind they may close up another space.

And yet, in spite of the killing pace and the stoney track, who, but the sluggish or the dolt, can hold aloof from the course? Who—like the belated traveller that stands watching fairy revels till he snatches and drains the goblin cup, and springs into the whirling circle—can view the mad tumult, and not be drawn into its midst? Not I, for one. I confess to the wayside arbour, the pipe of contentment, and the lotus-leaves being altogether unsuitable metaphors. They sounded very nice and philosophical, but I'm afraid I am not the sort of person to sit in arbours, smoking pipes, when there is any fun going on outside. I think I more resemble the Irishman, who, seeing a crowd collecting, sent his little girl out to ask if there was going to be a row—"Cos, if so, father would like to be in it."

I love the fierce strife. I like to watch it. I like to hear of people getting on in it—battling their way bravely and fairly, that is—not slipping through by luck or trickery. It stirs one's old Saxon fighting blood, like the tales of "knights who fought 'gainst fearful odds" thrilled us in our schoolboy days.

And fighting the battle of life is fighting against fearful odds, too. There are giants and dragons in this nineteenth century, and the golden casket that they guard is not so easy to win as it appears in the story-books. There, Algernon takes one long, last look at the ancestral hall, dashes the tear-drop from his eye, and goes off—to return in three years' time, rolling in riches. The authors do not tell us "how it's done," which is a pity, for it would surely prove exciting.

But then not one novelist in a thousand ever does tell us the real story of their hero. They linger for a dozen pages over a tea-party, but sum up a life's history with "he had become one of our merchant princes," or, "he was now a great

artist, with the world at his feet." Why, there is more real life in one of Gilbert's patter-songs than in half the biographical novels ever written. He relates to us all the various steps by which his office-boy rose to be the "ruler of the Queen's navee," and explains to us *how* the briefless barrister managed to become a great and good judge, "ready to try this breach of promise of marriage." It is in the petty details, not in the great results, that the interest of existence lies.

What we really want is a novel showing us all the hidden under-current of an ambitious man's career—his struggles, and failures, and hopes, his disappointments, and victories. It would be an immense success. I am sure the wooing of Fortune would prove quite as interesting a tale as the wooing of any flesh and blood maiden, though, by-the-way, it would read extremely similar; for Fortune is, indeed, as the ancients painted her, very like a woman—not quite so unreasonable and inconsistent, but nearly so—and the pursuit is much the same in one case as in the other. Ben Jonson's couplet—

—court a mistress, she denies you,
Let her alone, she will court you—

puts them both in a nutshell. A woman never thoroughly cares for her lover until he has ceased to care for her; and it is not until you have snapped your fingers in Fortune's face, and turned on your heel, that she begins to smile upon you.

But by that time, you do not much care whether she smiles or frowns. Why could she not have smiled when her smiles would have thrilled you with ecstasy? Everything comes too late in this world.

Good people say that it is quite right and proper that it should be so, and that it proves ambition is wicked.

Bosh! Good people are altogether wrong. (They always are, in my opinion. We never agree on any single point.) What would the world do without ambitious people, I should like to know? Why, it would be as flabby as a Norfolk dumpling. Ambitious people are the leaven which raises it into wholesome bread. Without ambitious people, the world would never get up. They are the busybodies who are about early in the morning, hammering, shouting, and rattling the fire-irons, and rendering it generally impossible for the rest of the house to remain in bed.

Wrong to be ambitious, forsooth! The men wrong, who, with bent back and sweating brow, cut the smooth road over which humanity marches forward from generation to generation! Men wrong, for using the talents that their Master has entrusted to them—for toiling while others play!

Of course they are seeking their reward. Man is not given that god-like unselfishness that thinks only of others' good. But in working for themselves they are working for us all. We are so bound together that no man can labour for himself alone. Each blow he strikes in his own behalf helps to mould the Universe. The stream, in struggling onward, turns the mill-wheel; the coral insect, fashioning its tiny cell, joins continents to one another; and the ambitious man,

building a pedestal for himself, leaves a monument to posterity. Alexander and Caesar fought for their own ends, but, in doing so, they put a belt of civilization half round the earth. Stephenson, to win a fortune, invented the steam-engine; and Shakespeare wrote his plays in order to keep a comfortable home for Mrs. Shakespeare and the little Shakespeares.

Contented, unambitious people are all very well in their way. They form a neat, useful background for great portraits to be painted against; and they make a respectable, if not particularly intelligent, audience for the active spirits of the age to play before. I have not a word to say against contented people so long as they keep quiet. But do not, for goodness' sake, let them go strutting about, as they are so fond of doing, crying out that they are the true models for the whole species. Why, they are the deadheads, the drones in the great hive, the street crowds that lounge about, gaping at those who are working.

And let them not imagine either—as they are also fond of doing—that they are very wise and philosophical, and that it is a very artful thing to be contented. It may be true that "a contented mind is happy anywhere," but so is a Jerusalem pony, and the consequence is that both are put anywhere and are treated anyhow. "Oh, you need not bother about him," is what is said; "he is very contented as he is, and it would be a pity to disturb him." And so your contented party is passed over, and the discontented man gets his place.

If you are foolish enough to be contented, don't show it, but grumble with the rest; and if you can do with a little, ask for a great deal. Because if you don't, you won't get any. In this world, it is necessary to adopt the principle pursued by the plaintiff in an action for damages, and to demand ten times more than you are ready to accept. If you can feel satisfied with a hundred, begin by insisting on a thousand; if you start by suggesting a hundred, you will only get ten.

It was by not following this simple plan that poor Jean Jacques Rousseau came to such grief. He fixed the summit of his earthly bliss at living in an orchard with an amiable woman and a cow, and he never attained even that. He did get as far as the orchard, but the woman was not amiable, and she brought her mother with her, and there was no cow. Now, if he had made up his mind for a large country estate, a houseful of angels, and a cattle show, he might have lived to possess his kitchen garden and one head of live stock, and even possibly have come across that *rara-avis*—a really amiable woman.

What a terribly dull affair, too, life must be for contented people! How heavy the time must hang upon their hands, and what on earth do they occupy their thoughts with, supposing that they have any? Reading the paper and smoking seems to be the intellectual food of the majority of them, to which the more energetic add playing the flute and talking about the affairs of the next-door neighbour.

They never know the excitement of expectation, nor the stern delight of accomplished effort, such as stir the pulse of the man who has objects, and hopes, and plans. To the ambitious man, life is a brilliant game—a game that calls forth all his

tact, and energy, and nerve—a game to be won, in the long run, by the quick eye and the steady hand, and yet having sufficient chance about its working out to give it all the glorious zest of uncertainty. He exults in it, as the strong swimmer in the heaving billows, as the athlete in the wrestle, the soldier in the battle.

And if he be defeated, he wins the grim joy of fighting; if he lose the race, he, at least, has had a run. Better to work and fail, than to sleep one's life away.

So, walk up, walk up, walk up. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen! walk up, boys and girls! Show your skill and try your strength; brave your luck, and prove your pluck. Walk up! the show is never closed, and the game is always going. The only genuine sport in all the fair, gentlemen—highly respectable, and strictly moral—patronized by the nobility, clergy, and gentry. Established in the year one, gentlemen, and been flourishing ever since!—walk up. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, and take a hand. There are prizes for all, and all can play. There is gold for the man and fame for the boy; rank for the maiden and pleasure for the fool. Walk up, walk up!—all prizes, and no blanks; for some few win, and as to the rest, why—

The rapture of pursuing
Is the prize for vanquished gain.

IN BAD HANDS.

A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Lazarus in London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VI.

DISAPPEARANCE.

FOLKESTONE MILES sat up all that night waiting and wishing for the coming of little Phil, but the choir boy was seen no more in Hercules Buildings, Lambeth. He had vanished like a ghost—leaving, ghost-like also, not a clue by which he might be tracked. Those who had trapped him had managed their nefarious business neatly, and had vanished as completely "into thin air" as the boy whom they had captured. Over the whole affair hung the black curtain, heavy and thick and pall-like, and there was no drawing it aside and seeing where Phil was. He was gone and for good.

He came not back to the organist's home; he was seen no more by aunt Bella who, pale, ill and patient, was sure every morning that she should hear of him before nightfall, possibly see him; and thus buoyed up for a while her poor vain hopes, though growing weaker every day along with them. Folkestone Miles, restless and excited, called twice a week to see her, to ask if there were any news, to talk it over downstairs with Mr. and Mrs. Broadbrook, and speculate with them concerning the great mystery, all three making wild guesses at the truth. "He must be dead," said Mr. Broadbrook on one of those occasions; "he would have surely found time to write, to let us

know somehow where he was. Depend upon it, sir, that boy is dead."

"I don't think so," remarked Mr. Miles.

"Murdered probably. If ever I cut the hair of a murderer for threepence I cut it that blessed night he kicked up such a row here," said the barber.

"It was not worth while to take all that trouble to murder Phil," said Mr. Miles.

"Perhaps there were estates coming to him," suggested Mrs. Broadbrook, who had been reading "penny dreadfuls," in large quantities, and was a little weak in mind in consequence.

"Yes, but who would have benefited by killing Phil?" said Mr. Broadbrook critically.

"The usurper," was his better half's confident reply.

"Who's he—that father of his!" cried the barber, with a disparaging elevation of his nose. "Well, he didn't look much like one to me; although I must say I never saw a real usurper to my knowledge. What's he like, Mr. Miles?"

Mr. Miles found it extremely difficult to describe off hand an usurper's personal appearance, and said he didn't know for certain. From a histrionic point of view, he thought it was something in black velvet with a point lace collar.

"Well, the boy's murdered," said Mr. Broadbrook firmly, "you see if he isn't. You wait."

"We shan't see—and we must wait," replied the organist as he walked away thoughtfully.

And seeing nothing and waiting in vain became the order of the day in Marsh Walk and Hercules Buildings, and with never a gleam of light to show the track through the mists. Mr. Broadbrook's neighbours talked of it for a time and then dismissed the subject; the choir boys wondered and wondered for a week or two, and then almost forgot that Phil had ever lived; the choirmaster, a sceptical man, half believed there had been an underhand plot to smuggle Phil off to another church at an advanced rate of wage; and the vicar, still more sceptical, was quite sure of *that*, for it was an old trick; the police laughed their heads nearly off at the station-house, and could see nothing alarming in a boy's going away with his own father, and without the ceremony of a formal farewell to a sleepy old aunt, and one or two people who seemed to know very little about him.

And so time drifted by, and the hot, close, summer time in Marsh Walk became the cooler autumn which presently drifted into the mild, wet winter for which that year was famous, even in crowded Lambeth, where the difference in the seasons is noted by the goods upon the coster's barrows rather than by any changing tints, or fall of leaves, and the nights which "draw in," as the phrase runs, are only regulated by the longer scores upon the dials of the gas-meters. And later in the winter Bella Wharton died and was buried by the parish, and Mr. and Mrs. Broadbrook officiated as chief mourners, and shut up shop to do honour to a lodger who had died very much in their debt, and yet with whom these wonderful folk were sorry to part. And later on still Mr. Broadbrook got more deeply into debt himself, and discovered that his landlord was a more merciless creditor than he had been to Phil's aunt; for the brokers swooped down in earnest upon him at last, and out went the barber, his wife,

and family in a strange hurry and were seen no more in Marsh Walk or parts adjacent. "I wonder what's become of old Broadbrook"—one or two people said at first—the landlord of the Jolly Gardeners, who missed a good customer, for one—and then the world spun round and there were fresh faces in the crowd of struggling men and women, and "*Jones, Dealer in Second-hand Wearing Apparel, and Ladies' Wardrobes Purchased*" was printed over the premises and announced in the windows where "*Broadbrook's Rose Oil for the Nursery*" had offered its attractions to the passers-by in vain.

To round off this portion of our little story we may chronicle another change, although it did not happen till late in the spring, when there were wall-flowers on the barrows, and green peas could be got sixpence a peck from the costermonger, if one were inclined to put faith in a measure the bottom of which was pushed upwards when the peas were put in! Mr. Folkestone Miles left the church at Westminster "to better himself," went in for a competition for an organist's post at a fashionable church further west, and got it, even to his own astonishment, not being quite certain whether he was a clever fellow or not, but inclined to think at times, and with a due amount of modesty, that he was not quite a fool. Hence Hercules Buildings knew him no longer, and the last of the characters of our story passed away from Lambeth, and, unlike the rest of them, began to prosper a little and to gather round him by degrees various well-paying pupils in the new neighbourhood in which he had pitched his tent. So whilst some folk went down others went up, in the see-saw fashion patent to humanity.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MINSTRELS OF THE TYROL.

A CLEAR twelve months after the disappearance of Phil Whartou there was bright summer weather down at the pleasant watering-place of Tenby, in South Wales. The old town was full of company; in the memory of the oldest inhabitant there had never been so prosperous a season, and the North and South Sands were equally thronged with visitors amusing themselves, or being amused, working hard at sand digging, cavern exploring, fossil hunting, energetic bathing, and desperate donkey riding, or taking it very easily in lazy, happy groups of loungers and sprawlers on the sands, or in the Castle grounds, listening to the Tenby band, or those itinerant musicians whose mission in life appeared to be to take the bread out of the mouths of the Tenby band by vigorous competition, and who had been lured thither on this occasion by the news of Tenby's doing well and being very full of company—of Monmouth and Cardiff folk, of Swansea swells, of the "fat of the land" from Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, of the families from London, with time and money to spare for the long journey, and for settling down afterwards, of the tourist from everywhere with his clattering bicycle, tricycle, sociable, or better than all, with his own sturdy legs to carry him up or down fair mountain side, cliff path, or valley, where anything on wheels would surely come to grief in this nubby quarter of the kingdom.

Into this romantic old Welsh watering-place there tramped one bright morning a band of singers and players who styled themselves "The Minstrels of the Tyrol," for no particular reason that was apparent, one man being a German, another unmistakably French, and the rest as thoroughly English as any one could wish—unless it was in a faint attempt at a costume which might by a stretch of imagination be set down as Tyrolean, and which consisted of steeple crowned hats, green cotton velvet jackets and knee-breeches, and tricolour ribbons dangling from their shoulders and knees, and from the rims of their weather-beaten felt hats.

They were eight in number, one man not a singing member of the corps, but a burly gentleman who wandered about with a highly polished shell, which was presented to each visitor who stopped to listen, and who, having contributed to the expenses of management, was rewarded with a bow so elaborate and profound, and with a grin so wide and alligatorish, that the suspicion that all this was a burlesque of gratitude instinctively occurred to him.

Nevertheless the "Minstrels of the Tyrol" became popular favourites at Tenby, and were rewarded by so many sixpences and shillings that the rumour that they were coining money began to circulate amongst the visitors. They became the favourites of the place—as itinerants will, under certain favourable conditions, and with some talent to raise them above the street standard of howling vagabonds—and their entertainment on the sands became extensively patronized, and was considered "quite the fashion" to attend between the hours of twelve and one.

These minstrels were clever in their way; the Frenchman was an expert violinist, who played on his instrument upside down, and fiddled away with extraordinary rapidity and precision; the German was a flautist of ability, and a third man worked the violoncello, less effectively perhaps but with a knowledge of time and tune that kept him in accord with his contemporaries. The remaining few were part-singers, and the chief attraction of the company; three voices were a little above the average of men singing out of doors for a living; but the fourth voice was of surprising sweetness and volume, a remarkable boy soprano voice, which took listeners off their guard and entranced them strangely. It was a voice out of the common run indeed, and led to innumerable inquiries of the man with the shell, who shrugged his broad shoulders and showed his big white teeth, and thanked everybody for much advice and friendly suggestion, and gave everybody as much information as time would allow concerning his "lectle son," speaking in the broken English of his native Whitechapel; but imposing on a few folk, credulous and unsuspicious.

"Filippo Moriega was a clayver boy—a goot boy—yes, he should be trained by great masters soon some day—to be sure. That's what he (Ludovic Moriega) was saving for—taking a troupe round the country for—to make money to give Filippo—Gord bless him!—a musical education at Rome. Indeed, they were making their way to Rome now, the whole of them," M. Moriega, senior, affirmed, as though Rome was somewhere round the corner, and South Wales was indubitably the nearest way to it.

Filippo said very little himself, and it was found very difficult to say anything to him; he remained always in the centre of the singers and players, a thin pale-faced youth, with large grey eyes and a very sad and thoughtful expression in them—a youth who walked with a crutch, and that with considerable difficulty it was observed.

"What a pity he is a cripple," said many a sympathizer amongst the crowd which the "Minstrels of the Tyrol" drew about them; and "has he been a cripple all his life?" was often the inquiry put to M. Moriega, who answered "Ya'as," unless his questioner looked medical, when he said "No, sa'ar," with equal confidence, before he bowed himself from too many questions which might become irksome and inquisitorial. It was observed that none of the minstrels cared for too much questioning: they were in Tenby to sing and play, not to give autobiographical sketches of their career, and at times they were so haughty and reserved that a few romantic minds had spread about the notion that they were foreign noblemen in disguise, Italian refugees or Neapolitan wreckage, or a something or other wrapped in mystery, although the maestro of the company was of the full proportions of an English navvy, and looked far more bulgy than aristocratic, even in his green cotton velvet smalls.

It was one hot August morning, when the "Minstrels of the Tyrol" were playing and singing to a large audience on the South sands, that a lady and gentleman, attracted by the crowd and by the part-singing which was going on just then, left off walking hand-in-hand, in a slightly silly and sentimental fashion, and strolled towards the centre of attraction.

"Something in your line, dear," said the lady.

"Yes, my darling love, so it is," replied the gentleman.

The affectionate couple stood at the back of the crowd and clasped hands together again, then the gentleman who wore violet glasses on his nose, and a straw hat encircled by a broad blue ribbon, on the extreme back of his head, rose on tiptoe and endeavoured to peer over the heads of the audience, and failing in his manoeuvre, being short of stature, to gain a clear view of the singers began jumping about like a sportive kangaroo.

"My dear Folkestone, whatever is it?" exclaimed the lady, alarmed for the sanity of her brand new spouse and helpmate—not married more than forty-eight hours to him either, and coming all the way from Westminster Bridge Road, where the wedding had been celebrated, to this picturesque portion of South Wales to spend the honeymoon.

"What's the matter? Oh, dear! what is it? Is it a fish-bone? Won't you tell me?"

"It's all right, Fanny; it isn't a bone in my throat—it's the voice—it's—that boy!" he exclaimed incoherently, and continuing to jump.

"In your throat—a boy! Oh, Folkestone! what do you mean?"

"It's Philip Wharton—you know—the missing lad. I'll swear it is, by thunder!" exclaimed the excited organist. "Fanny, we must part!"

"Oh, mercy!"

"For a few minutes—perhaps for half-an-hour, or till dinner-time—don't fret; don't stop me—please let go the pocket of my jacket, Fanny, or I shall rip—I must know all the truth!"

And with a sudden dive into the crowd, unprepared for so unceremonious an attack in the rear, Folkestone Miles plunged his way into the front rank and stood glaring through his glasses at the singers, deaf to the objurgations and protests of several ladies and gentlemen, astonished, shocked and indignant at his rudeness, and hurling "Well-I'm-sure's" and "I-never-did's" on all sides at him. But he paid no heed to them—did not even hear them.

Yes, that was surely Philip Wharton! Little Phil, of Marsh Walk—the lad who had been spirited away from him, carried off twelve months ago almost to the very day. But Phil did not recognize him, although he stood exactly in front of him, and Folkestone's glasses should have been a landmark and reminiscence. Folkestone could have run forward and shaken hands with him—even have hugged him to his breast in the joy of the discovery; but a second and wiser impulse warned him to be careful. If it should be necessary to get Phil away from them, if Phil was a prisoner and anxious to escape, if he had not joined this band of singers and players of his own free will, he, Folkestone Miles, must not let any excitement betray him to this crew. He would simply stand there direct in front of Phil until he was recognized by the lad. There would be plenty of time to act afterwards, he thought.

But Phil did not recognize him. Gentlemen in neutral tinted glasses, blue, violet, or black, were not uncommon in August by the seaside when the sun's glare was powerful, and Phil had got used to them now, although they had made him start more than once in the grim early days of his strange wanderings. And the present Folkestone Miles was so wholly unlike the little, shabby, rusty black-frocked young man by whose side he had trotted in the old Lambeth days, that he could not associate the organist of St. Eustace with a straw hat, a pilot jacket, a pair of baggy white flannel trousers and sand shoes of a dazzling brown. That was a wholly festive figure, foreign to Hercules Buildings and the life within fifty miles of it. This was holiday time, and there had been no holidays in Lambeth for Folkestone Miles any more than for Phil Wharton.

The boy glanced once at him from underneath his broad felt brim, and went on with his singing calmly and unconsciously, and the thought that he might be mistaken crossed the mind of the organist. Phil was not so tall, not quite so pale and thin as that, and not a youth scarcely able to put the tip of one foot to the ground—the crutch was against him, and the costume, and the place in which he was. But that voice, thought Mr. Miles, with his ears attuned to music very keenly, and with a memory for voices that had music in them preternaturally strong, was it possible he should be deceived? Phil's was an uncommon voice, too; he had had strange dreams of what Phil's voice might turn out one of these fine days if it were cared for properly and duly trained; it had been, as a soprano in a church choir, a remarkable voice, it was on these bright sands, and with a sea breeze interfering with it, still more remarkable that day.

Yes, it must be Phil; but why did not Phil recognize him as readily as he had recognized Phil, thought Folkestone Miles, not taking into account the extraordinary "character" of his

tourist suit, and the complete disguise it was to him. Presently an idea seized him; he would beat time with a copy of that day's *Birmingham Post*, which he carried in his hand. He had a demonstrative way of beating time, and the choir boys had often giggled at it, when he had been called upon to act as deputy in the choir-master's absence, and Phil had laughed too, or sat and stared at him with wonder when he was extra energetic, which had occurred more than once in his lodgings in Hercules Buildings.

Folkstone Miles rolled up his newspaper, and began, to the evident astonishment and disgust of the Tyrolese; there was a little tittering amongst the community around him; "a musical enthusiast," said one, and "drunk so early in the morning—dreadful!" was the verdict of the charitable majority. When he had executed a particular flourish with his extempore bâton, and stamped wildly upon the sand—sending a dense shower of gritty particles over a basket of very sticky tarts which a youth was purveying round the circle—the boy, Filippo Moriega, or Phil Wharton, turned suddenly very white, dropped his crutch and left off singing.

It was only for an instant, but Mr. Miles knew he had been recognized, although Phil was strangely impassive the instant afterwards, and went on singing very calmly as though nothing remarkable had occurred to disturb his equanimity.

Folkstone Miles left off beating time, put a shilling into the shell which Signor Ludovic Moriega presented to him suddenly, with his usual bow and broad grimace, and with an extra keen look at him from head to foot, as at an object of great interest. Folkstone backed his way out of the crowd and rejoined his anxious wife, who was inclined to reproach him, and to sob upon his shoulder in the light of day.

"I—I didn't think you would desert me like this—and so soon too," she cried.

"My darling, you don't understand!" cried Folkstone Miles.

"Oh! why did I leave home!"

"My precious one—haven't I explained? Don't you remember all about little Phil Wharton?" he exclaimed.

"Phil who?"

"Phil Wharton, of Marsh Walk—the choir boy."

"Yes—yes. I think I do. But is this—this a time—to be running after dirty boys!"

"My dear Fanny, we must save him. We—they're going. Good gracious!" And away darted the excitable organist again, as the crowd separated, and the minstrels one by one plodded across the deep sands towards the High Street. The boy with the crutch was the last of them, and Folkstone had increased his pace to get to his side and say a few words, when the big fellow, like a shabby cotton-velvet brigand as he was, suddenly strode back and took up his position on the right of his son, clutching at Phil's arm, dragging it through his own, and glancing back at Folkstone Miles who was stealthily approaching.

"Who are you looking after?" he asked.

"Nobody."

"Yes you are. I know that man," Foxy growled in the ear of his offspring, "and so do you. So take care what you're about, do you hear? or it will be the worse for you."

(To be continued.)

UNCOMFORTABLE GRANDEUR.

FEW English visitors can fail to be impressed with the idea, that behind the supremely artificial splendours with which "Louis the Great" took so much pains to surround himself and his court at Versailles, there must have been a woeful lack of personal comfort, not to say, common necessities of decent existence. It is, indeed, obvious that the day's life of the "Roi-Soliel" and his be-laced and be-ribboned courtiers was not passed wholly in those extravagant over-painted, over-gilded, and over-mirrored salons and galleries, of which the Paris holiday-makers on Sundays, and Mr. Cook's bands of excursionists on other days of the week, take brief and wondering surveys; there were the hours of privacy, and these were passed under conditions such as would now be regarded as intolerable, save by people unhappily condemned to live in the midst of the squalor and personal neglect that commonly accompany the lowest poverty. A number of new and extremely suggestive facts in relation to this subject, have been gathered together in a monograph on the Chateau de Versailles by M. Dussieux, a writer deeply versed in the small as well as in the great details of French history; and some of these we present to the reader—sufficient to call up a picture, which, as a writer in the *Temps* judiciously remarks, "seems several centuries old, so far are these relatively modern manners removed from those of the day in which we live."

Divinity constrains; without etiquette, no Olympus. Everything was magnificent at the Court of Louis XIV. and his anonymous wife, Madame de Maintenon; everything there was noble, but at the same time horribly monotonous. The king was a man of order, of habit; every day was ruled, like a sheet of music-paper. The chamber in which he slept, and in which he died, is one of the few that have been respected in the alterations which have been effected in the building, but the furniture on which the visitor now looks is of recent date; the bed itself has been formed out of fragments of tapestry brought from elsewhere. The balustrades of gilded wood are, indeed, ancient. It is in this chamber that the famous ceremonials of the risings and goings-to-bed were enacted; it is here that the prince gave audience to ambassadors, received the oaths of the great officers of his household, and dined in private.

But the side of the bed-chamber was his study, and, beyond that, the closet in which his wigs were kept, ranged in a large cupboard. Louis changed his perruques several times a day; he put on a short one on rising, then another to go to mass, yet another after dinner, on returning from the chase, and for walking. The person charged with the care of his Majesty's perruques, had two hundred crowns from the privy purse. As to the king's study, it was the most important room in the palace; in a way, the centre of the monarchy. All the great resolutions of the reign were taken there. The king there held his councils and worked with his ministers. With what conscience he acquitted himself of all his State duties, is well known. Councils were being continually held, even during holiday-time, at Marly and Fontain-

bleau, and even when the king was laid up in bed with the gout. Friday was held sacred by Louis and consecrated to the Archbishop of Paris and Père de la Chaise. He did not regard his daily task as completed with the work of the morning, but continued it in the evening, in the apartment of Madame de Maintenon, with one or other of his ministers. Louvois, his Minister of War, was often enraged at having to speak of the most secret affairs before this woman, sitting beside the fire, listening to all that was said without saying a word, but holding herself ready to take part in the *tête-à-tête* later on. It was one of these motives that exasperated the minister and brought about the strained state of relations with his master, which would certainly have been fatal to him, if he had not escaped disgrace by dying.

In the present day it is hardly possible to form an exact idea of the refinements of etiquette which, from morning to night, regulated all the movements of the Court. Pages might be filled with details of the ceremonial at the getting up, the going to bed, and the meals. His Majesty only had himself shaved on two days in the year; after being shaved he partook of a specially-prepared broth.

After breakfasting, his Majesty took off his dressing-gown, and the Master of the Wardrobe drew off the night-shirt, holding it by the right sleeve, while the head valet of the wardrobe held it by the left; he handed it to one of the officers of the wardrobe. Before the removal of his night-shirt, the king took off the reliques which he wore day and night, and gave them to the chief valet de chambre, who took them to the royal study and put them into a small bag in his Majesty's purse, which lay with his Majesty's watch on the table, and kept charge of all these articles, until his Majesty entered the study.

Meanwhile a wardrobe attendant brought the shirt, which he had warmed, if it needed it, and held ready to be handed, in a covering of white sarsinet. Then, to pass the shirt to his Majesty, if the Dauphin was present, the Grand Chamberlain or the First Gentleman of the Chamber, the Grand Master of the Wardrobe, or other superior officer received it from the attendant, and presented it to Monseigneur le Dauphin to hand to the king; or, in the Dauphin's absence, to the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Berry, or the Duke of Orleans. The other princes of the blood, or *légitimés*, took the shirt from the hands of the wardrobe attendant, to whom they gave their hats, gloves, and walking-sticks to hold. As soon as the king had on his clean shirt and was half dressed, the attendant took from his knees the shirt he had cast off. While his Majesty took off his night-shirt and put on his day-shirt, two wardrobe attendants held up the former garment in front of him, so as to screen him from sight. As soon as the shirt was handed to him, it was held for him, the right sleeve by the head valet de chambre, the left by the head wardrobe attendant. After that, the king rose from his seat, and the Master of the Wardrobe helped him on with his *haut-de-chausses*.

For meals there was not less ceremony arranged. The king always dined in private—that is to say, in his bed-chamber. The table laid, the principal courtiers entered, and, after them, "known people." If, by chance, the Dauphin and his sons were

present, they remained standing without being invited by the king, even to sit down. More often than not, Monsieur, the king's brother, was there. "He handed the napkin," says Saint-Simon, "and remained standing. After awhile, the king, noticing that he did not move, asked him whether he would not be seated; he made a low bow, and his Majesty ordered a seat to be brought for him. A covered stool was placed behind him. Some moments later, the king said to him: "Sit down, brother." He made another low bow, and sat till the end of the dinner."

It needed all the ascendancy which the Duchess of Burgundy had gained over the king, for her to dare to break through these forms. But what a delight it was to her to do it! One day, on returning from hunting, she dined à la *clochette* with the Princess of Conty and some of their ladies—the pleasure of the repast consisting in its being partaken without the presence of servants. They had a small table laid with plates, glasses, and other necessaries, placed under it, and helped themselves. If they needed anything which they had not at hand, they rang a bell to call an attendant.

A famous anecdote, related by Madame Campan, will readily recall itself to the memory of readers of her charming book of gossip; that of Marie-Antoinette, bare-shouldered and shivering, waiting for the chemise which etiquette demanded to have passed, from hand to hand, in such a way that each should be more worthy than the precedent to perform this part of her Majesty's toilette. The following recital by the Duke of Luynes gives a not less characteristic example of the same kind of pedantry.

"Yesterday (the date is 1734) the Queen, on rising from table and walking in her chamber, noticed dust upon the counterpane of her bed. She had Madame de Luynes called (her Maid of Honour) who sent for the queen's valet-de-chambre upholsterer. This person, who holds also the same position in the king's service, argued that the counterpane was not an article of upholstery, that the matter concerned those whose duty it was to make the beds, but who must not touch the furniture, which, again, is the business of the keeper of the Furniture. According to this reasoning, not only the queen's bed, but the seats and canopies, which have all coverings to them, must be and are full of dust, without any fault on the part of the valet-de-chambre upholsterer. Madame de Luynes told the upholsterer, that it was his business to inform the keeper of the Furniture; this was done, and the dust removed."

That the idea of divinity, in speaking of the king, was not exaggerated, is exemplified in the following trait:—When ladies, and even princesses of the blood, passed through the king's chamber, they made a low bow to the bed of his Majesty; and they did the same to the "Nef." This was a piece of goldsmith's work in the form of a ship, and contained the articles employed in the service of the king's table—the salt-cellar, carving-knives, and napkins, enclosed in scented bags. All persons passing in front of the "Nef," even princesses, had to salute it, as well as the bed.

Pleasures, at Versailles, were regulated like everything else. If they varied with the seasons, each season brought back perpetually the conse-

crated divisions. The king, who had suffered from fainting-fits in the campaign of 1693, and had been obliged to return precipitately, from that time, no more went to the wars; but he made many journeys to Compiègne and Fontainebleau—to Compiègne in the spring, and to Fontainebleau in the autumn—his principal amusements there being the same as at Versailles—walks, hunting, comedies, dancing, and play. Promenades were made on foot, on horseback, or in a gondola on the canal.

At Versailles, during the winter, there were three times a week what were called "apartements." These were evening entertainments, given to the whole Court in the grand apartments of the palace. Great liberty was permitted. Some played at cards, others danced; others, again, walked about and conversed. The king himself mixed with the groups, going from one card-table to another.

There was a buffet, as we should now call it, with liqueurs and chocolate. All this entailed heavy expense, and ended by tiring the king. From the end of 1691 he ceased to attend these assemblies, and was supplanted by the Dauphin. In 1693 the liqueurs and chocolate were suppressed for the sake of economy. Throughout this reign, indeed, the most pinching want of means was

"The year 1700," Saint-Simon relates, "began with reform. The king declared that he would no longer defray the cost of the alterations made by the courtiers in their lodgings. It is believed that Madame de Mailly has been the cause of this, who for three or four years, made changes in hers every year. The change made is more convenient, because the desired alterations can now be made, without the king's permission having first to be asked; on the other hand, every one has to pay the cost of what he has had done."

How were lodged all those courtiers to whom Louis XIV. offered, or on whom he imposed, hospitality? But, in the first place, how was the king himself lodged? Horribly ill. Comfort was unknown at that epoch. Architecture, taking the ancients and Italy for its models, cared only for magnificence of exterior. Grand salons, galleries, and staircases were fitted up; the rooms were placed one at the end of another, without order or separation. The king could not pass from his own apartments to those of the queen, without traversing the *Ceil-de-Bœuf*, a public antechamber, always crowded with people. When Mercy d'Argenteau succeeded in getting "the King's Passage" made, it had to be carried through staircases, dark closets, and rooms. A plan given by M. Dussieux shows what violence had to be done to the then existing arrangement of the building, to establish a communication so necessary.

And Madame de Maintenon, what was her lodging like? At Versailles, as everywhere at that time, the fireplaces were of enormous size, and gave out but very little warmth. The poor lady, with her rheumatism, knew something about that. She sat in an arm-chair resembling a watch-box, with sides and a roof, to screen her from drafts. "The weather is so cold here," wrote the Palatine in 1695, "that at the king's table, the wine as well as the water, freezes in the glasses."

If the masters of the palace were lodged in this miserable fashion, the straits to which visitors were reduced may easily be imagined. The palace alone contained five thousand persons, and its dependencies as many more. It was a town in itself. The crowding was frightful. The attics, at the present time used as the Portrait Gallery, were divided and sub-divided into a multitude of cells, which served for the apartments of the highest and most powerful personages. Even far into the following century the state of things was no better, as is exemplified in an account of a visit to the palace, made towards 1768.

Menon Philipon, afterwards Madame Roland, was not quite fourteen years of age when her mother took her to Versailles to see the Court. One of the Dauphiness's women, who knew them, and who was not on duty at the time, lent them her apartment. "It was under the roof," wrote Madame Roland, "in the same corridor as that of the Archbishop of Paris, and so close to it, that this prelate had to take care that we did not overhear what he said; on our side the same precaution was necessary. Two chambers, furnished in a very mediocre manner, the upper portion of one of them having had contrived in it a sleeping-place for a valet; the situation detestable from the obscurity of the corridor, and the stench arising from a water-closet. Such was the habitation of which a duke and peer of France thought himself honoured by having the like, and so being able to crawl every morning to be present at the rising of king's; this, however, was the rigorist Beaumont."

The palace was not only a town by the number of its inhabitants, but also by the nature of its population, the number of domestics, tradespeople, and persons of all conditions, drawn by the presence of so many masters. There were shops on the landing-places of the grand staircase, in the galleries, and even in the vestibule, which was abandoned to them, and called the "Salon des Marchands," where articles for the toilette, stationery, and books were sold. There were even beggars in the palace, and, indeed, their number became so great, that Louis XIV. directed Dangeau to send in fifty Suisses to seize the people who were begging, and have them taken to the hospital. On the other hand, and with the exception of this bit of rigorous action, there was no police. Anybody could go anywhere about the palace freely. Two prying persons having once lost their way in the staircases and corridors, reached the door of the royal study, where his Majesty was busily working with one of his ministers; they knocked, and it was the king himself, who opened the door to these strangers.

There is nothing astonishing in the fact that, under these conditions, robberies were frequent, even in the apartments of the king himself. One can equally well understand how Damiens was able to approach Louis XV. as he was getting into a carriage, and stab him with a penknife. De Luynes declares that, in the midst of men and horses, the would-be-assassin might easily have made his escape, had he chosen to do so.

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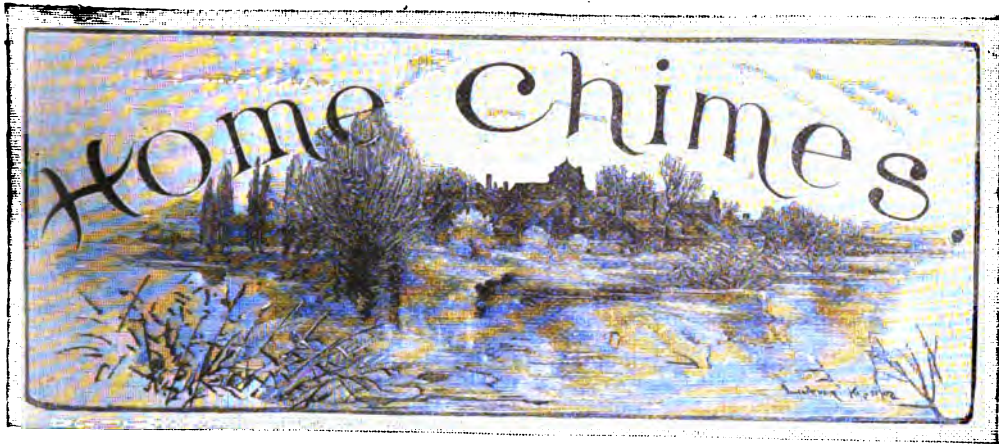
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 5.]

LONDON: JANUARY 31, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY

A RACE FOR LOVE.

BY PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

WHEN pretty Alice Fairfield jilted John Smith, the rich New York stock-broker, no one was surprised—not even the luckless gentleman himself, who deep down in his heart had had a presentiment that something of the kind would happen. She always *had* wondered why she took him at all?—a question which she asked herself later on; and not being able to answer it to her own satisfaction she, said to him one day:

“John, dear, would it make you very, very unhappy if our engagement were to be broken off?”

She had a pretty voice, and it trembled then with pleading music.

“Yes,” replied Smith, “it would make me *most* unhappy.”

“I am so sorry,” came from her almost in a whisper, “because I am going to ask you to release me. It’s not my fault. I was mistaken. I find I don’t love you as much as I thought I did.”

“You’re a heartless flirt, that’s what you are!” rejoined Smith, whose command of words was not great.

“No, not that, my dear Mr. Smith,” she protested. But he had gone, and she knew that she was again a free woman.

What she had liked about Smith had undoubtedly been his money; and she rather liked the look of him too, for he was a large, powerfully built young man. On the other hand his ways were very vulgar; his grammar, to say the least of it, was uncertain; and she was an especially refined little lady—a dainty moss-rose of a woman, loving the soft places of life. No! Smith was too dear a price to pay for Smith’s money! So she dismissed him; and, as I have said, no one wondered.

The news travelled fast, for the Fairfields were well-known in New York. But it is with London,

not New York, that we have now to do. Business, not a broken heart, brought Mr. Smith across the Atlantic; and one cold October evening, the Liverpool express deposited him on the platform of the Euston Square Railway station. He took up his quarters at the North Western Hotel, dined well, and then repaired to the smoking-room, where he chanced to meet an old New York friend, by name Walter Wellard.

“And where is your wife?” inquired Wellard, when the two had exchanged greetings.

“Wife? I have no wife. I’m through with that.”

“What!” exclaimed the other man, “you are not going to marry Miss Fairfield?”

“I guess,” said Mr. Smith, lighting a fresh cigar, “that it’s the other way round; it’s Miss Fairfield that isn’t going to marry me.”

“You’ve had a difference?” asked Wellard, who seemed intensely interested.

“Well, you can hardly call it a difference. She found out that she didn’t care for me as much as she thought. She said so, and I told her she could go to the end of the world for all I cared.”

“Do you think you had a rival?”

“Maybe; I don’t know. Women are past finding out.”

Wellard, who had become unaccountably animated, called for a bottle of champagne, in which he drank his friend Smith’s health most enthusiastically. The truth is, that he had fallen a victim himself to the violet eyes, the warm brown hair, the small red mouth, the lithe figure, and all the other charms of Miss Fairfield. He was beginning to think she liked him, when Mr. Smith stepped in and made the winning.

There was nothing to keep Wellard in America, so he went abroad, there to try and forget his trouble. But he tried vainly. London seemed to him gloomy, and Paris frivolous. Venice seemed not at all what he had hoped it would be. To be in Rome was like reading perpetual “Transformation,” and the best of books wearies one if read too

much. Florence taught him to loathe pictures. No! for him there was no balm in Gilead.

There was one face only that he wished to see, one voice only that he wished to hear. And now he was thinking of returning, when he chanced on Smith, and learned that Alice Fairfield was once more free. During his travels abroad he had succeeded in realizing a fortune, by investing his money in what turned out to be most remunerative stock. Miss Fairfield was one of those women who will marry almost any man, if he be rich enough, and reasonably good looking. It was impossible to think of her caring desperately about any one.

Walter Wellard's passage was taken in the *City of Liverpool* for that day week; and so full was he of what he had heard, that he rushed off the very next day to impart the joyful intelligence to a sympathetic friend, an American named Clayton, who, like Wellard, was abroad for pleasure only. He was a plausible kind of person, was this Mr. Clayton. He really told you little about himself; yet he managed to leave an impression on your mind that to you and you only had he opened his heart.

He was at late breakfast when Wellard entered in a very whirlwind of excitement.

"What's up?" asked Mr. Clayton, regarding his friend with interest. "You resemble nothing so much as a soda-water bottle in warm weather!"

"I have cause for my excitement," said Wellard.

"You won't eat or drink anything?"

"Nothing!"

"Well, your news!"

"My news is that she is free, and I am rich."

Clayton swallowed his chocolate quickly and coughed. Then he said,

"You mean that Miss Fairfield is free?"

"I had the news last night from Smith, the man she was to have married."

"Yes, that does look pretty conclusive," remarked the other.

"And this day week," continued Wellard, "I shall be on my way to her!"

"You seem sanguine as to the result of your proposal!"

"I am not without hope! that is all I can say. Oh, if only I can win her what a proud man I shall be! Did you ever see such beautiful eyes as she has, and such hair too?"

"Or such hands, or such feet, or such a smile, or such a laugh, or such a figure," went on Clayton derisively.

"What you say is about true," assented the other. "I should think it would be difficult to match her in anything! I am wild with impatience to be on my homeward way. I must run off now, as I have a hundred and one things to see after."

So they two parted.

A happy man and a hopeful was Mr. Walter Wellard when he came on board the *City of Liverpool*. When you have given up all hope of ever attaining something which you very much wish to possess, and suddenly find it once more within your possible reach, the sensation is a very pleasant one.

The usual commotion preceding the departure of an Atlantic steamer was going on all round Mr. Wellard, but he heeded it not, so engrossed was he in his own dreams. Parting lovers agonized close by him, but he saw them not. The second bell

rang; the passengers clustered along the bulwarks to see the last of those faithful friends who had accompanied them on board, and now were returning to shore in the tender. With a clatter and a clash, the gangway was withdrawn and the tender swung away from the steamer's side. Wellard, who had been absently leaning on the bulwarks, his eyes indifferently following the parting tender, now turned round, and found standing close by him, in a travelling suit, with a cigar in his mouth—whom but his friend Clayton.

"Surprised to see me?" said that gentleman. "Thought, like yourself, I would have a run and see how things were getting along." There was a twinkling elation in his eye which the other did not like.

"You—you're going across?"

"Certainly. Should have left two days earlier but for ill-luck."

"You told me nothing of this plan?" said Wellard.

"That is quite true. I suppose it is free to us all to speak or not, as we think best."

"I know what it is," cried Wellard. "You are hurrying back to see if you cannot forestall me with Miss Fairfield!"

"Your penetration, my friend, does you credit. That is precisely what I am going to try and do. We were very good friends once; then we quarrelled; Smith stepped in; and I came abroad."

"And you never told me anything of all this?"

"And why in the world should I?" replied Clayton; and with this inquiry for answer he turned and went below.

The month was October, the day cold and bleak, with a grey sky and a harsh wind. The Mersey looked dirty and dreary, as if it were sick of being a river and doing the same old thing every day. Nearly all the passengers seemed forlorn or cross. The Englishman, who had parted from either his betrothed or newly-made wife, aware that he had not been able to repress a quick rush of tears to his eyes as he saw her pass down the gangway to the tender and her pale face turned back for a last look, now tried to retrieve his national character by assuming an air of lively interest in what was going on around him. He lit a cigar and swaggered about the hurricane-deck as only an Englishman of a certain type knows how to swagger. He conversed with the sailors, and would even have patronized the captain, but with Captain Hall that was not very possible. Then he went down to the saloon, where he found, amongst other passengers, Mr. Clayton, in talk with an Irishman, O'Sullivan by name.

They seemed the only two really cheerful people on board. Hardy—that was the Englishman's name—fell into the conversation, which was naturally of Atlantic voyages.

"Faith," said the Irishman, when the Atlantic seemed talked out; "faith, it is a great country we are going to! America and old Ireland will make the future of the world. There is not a doubt about it."

"Is that your opinion?" asked Hardy, with a sneer. "I am really interested to hear it from a native. I always imagined somehow that it was a kind of thing got up by the newspapers for our amusement. No, and is it really not so?"

This in rejoinder to a hot-blooded answer from the Irishman. Then Mr. Clayton, with tact,

interposed, and made the conversation general again.

But Wellard spoke not to man or woman; he walked the deck, plunged in his own bitter meditations. He knew that in Clayton, the man who had so basely taken advantage of his confidence, he had a formidable rival. For Clayton was a handsome man, generally popular with women, and rather better off in the matter of money than Wellard, although, as I have said, the latter had nothing to complain of on that score. Undoubtedly, if Clayton had proposed to Miss Fairfield before her engagement to Smith, he would have been accepted. Wellard felt that he could hardly dash off, the very instant he arrived in New York, to the Fairfields' house, and, falling at Alice's feet, declare all his love. On the other hand, he believed that Clayton *could* pursue this course.

Just as there are some women who can make the simplest dress look stylish by their way of putting it on, so there are men who can make actions on their part look graceful which in other men would look, to say the least of it, ridiculous. There was hardly any position which Clayton could not have carried off well, while his rival, with a good open face and a certain attraction of extreme earnestness of voice and manner in all he said, did, or undertook, quite lacked those many subtle graces so difficult to define, but so potent in their effect, which made Clayton such a favourite in society.

Poor Wellard! He was an unhappy man, indeed, as he walked up and down, realizing his position. The October evening settled down upon the sea; a cold rain began to fall; the dinner-bell sounded, and over the meal the passengers became more animated. But Wellard wanted no dinner, and continued his weary march up and down the deck.

O'Sullivan, coming up after dinner for a few minutes' look round, encountered him, asked why he had not joined them, and tried to be friendly; but Wellard—who, as a rule, was a courteous man—being changed for the time, repulsed these well-meant advances somewhat rudely. If he could but have looked into the future, he would have acted very differently. But, alas! we men are blind. At length he left the deck, went down to his state-room, and lay long awake, listening to the sound of the machinery, as the great ship went shaking and throbbing on its way. At last, worn out in mind and body, he fell into a sleep like a stupor.

When he awoke late the next day the *City of Liverpool* was off Queenstown. There was the usual commotion; the coming on board of fresh passengers; the despatching and receiving of letters. Ah! those last words of love sent after us by our dear ones left behind, or sent to them by us, going on to face the long voyage! The English lover received a letter while sitting in the saloon. He tossed it aside as if it were a thing of no importance. Then he took it up and went to his state-room, where he remained some time. It was not a long letter, but it may be he read it more than once.

"Good-bye to my dear country for a little while!" cried O'Sullivan, waving his hat in the direction of Queenstown.

"Why, what an infatuated old patriot it is!"

said Clayton, coming up and resting his arm on the younger man's shoulder. "I will say 'Good-bye too, and God bless her!' Will that do?"

"I thank you from my soul!" responded the warm-hearted Irishman; and the two men, who had become fast friends, shook hands, and went below.

At the luncheon-table, our friend Wellard presented himself, and there, being hungry after his long fast, he did great execution. I have always wondered at those ladies and gentlemen in fiction who, whenever they are in trouble, neither eat nor sleep until it has past, and yet live to see it pass! and upon whom days of fasting and nights of insomnia seem to have no prejudicial effects at all.

After he had well partaken of luncheon, he felt less despairing, and went on deck, there to smoke a pipe and face matters. On one point he had quite made up his mind, which was, that whether it looked absurd or not, he would go straight to Miss Fairfield the very instant the ship reached New York. It was a slight chance, but he felt it was his only one.

It is hardly necessary to say that he and his rival interchanged no word. The ship was now making rapid way. There was nothing between her and America but the steep Atlantic waves. They were going with a favourable wind, and a fast, fair voyage was anticipated, when on the third day the wind shifted ahead, and speedily blew up to a gale.

Then there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth. The fair women, and the women who were not fair, took to their berths and remained there. Some of the men also retired, and few got beyond the smoking-room, where they played cards under difficulties, and drank much brandy.

"Thrown about as if we were nine-pins! I declare it is most unhandsome on the part of the Atlantic!" exclaimed Mr. O'Sullivan, who had just been flung face forwards by a tremendous lurch. Then up, up, went the ship, and then down, down, and then she drew all to one side as if winning from the waves.

"I don't believe the ship likes it any better than we do! Doesn't she seem to toss about as if she were in pain?" remarked Clayton, who had become rather pale.

The gale soon became so violent as to be absolutely dangerous, as most of those on board knew, and no one better than the captain. Lying in their berths, the passengers listened to the shrill fulsetto of the wind shrieking over the deck, and not only felt but heard the great waves as they buffeted and washed over the ship. The women quaked with fear, and thought that if they ever debarked they never, never again would embark! Most of the men wished, for good or bad, that they had done, or had left undone, certain things; for it is only when there seems a strong chance of our being brought face to face with death that we fully realize all that the past has meant. There was Brown, with whom we quarrelled, and who probably meant no harm! Had it been worth while? And alas, for our wives and our sweethearts! Woe is me! woe is me!

Selfishly, Wellard rather hoped that the *City of Liverpool* would go down, for then at any rate, if he could not marry Miss Fairfield, neither could Clayton! On the third day of the gale and the sixth day out, those on board thought in very

earnest that their last hour had come! for when the gale was at its maddest, when it and the waves seemed to be tearing the ship in pieces, to be rending it plank from plank—when the oldest seamen staggered about the decks as if they were drunk—above the furious raging of the wind and sea, a tremendous crash was heard, and the ship made a fearful forward plunge.

Word, however, was soon sent by the captain to those entrusted to his care, that there was no cause for alarm; they had broken their propeller, and would have to go the rest of the way under sail. Some of the passengers would almost as soon have gone to the bottom, as this announcement meant such protraction of their sufferings. But the worst was over. From that hour the gale moderated, the sea subsided, and in a day or two the voyagers were becoming resigned to their situation, and assured that tedium was all that now had to be dreaded. The women came out of their state-rooms and compared notes; the men played cards and smoked and betted on the "run."

On the eleventh day a great excitement was experienced; a steamer came in sight, and proved to be a sister-ship, the *City of Philadelphia*. She fraternally "lay to" on being made aware of the plight of the *City of Liverpool*, and offered to take her mails and three passengers; she could not accommodate more. Captain Hall accepted the offer with thanks, and it was decided that the passengers should cast lots, and that those who drew the lucky numbers, seven, fourteen, and twenty-one, should be transferred to the *City of Philadelphia*.

It was really quite an exciting occasion when the passengers, gathered together in the saloon, crowded round the hat in which the lots were mixed. Lots had been previously cast to decide the order in which the passengers should draw.

It was Wellard's turn first, and as he put his hand into the hat his heart beat very fast and his face was very white.

"That rude sullen man wants to get to New York badly," remarked Mr. O'Sullivan to himself—a conjecture in which he was quite right. Mr. Wellard had good reason for his anxiety. He *did* want to get to New York very badly indeed! His hand lingered for a minute or two among the lots, as if it could by touch distinguish the lucky numbers; then he drew it out, and almost a groan escaped from him as he saw that he had drawn a blank!

The next to draw was a New York merchant, who knew that thousands of dollars depended on his reaching New York in good time.

"Sorry to disappoint you, gentlemen, but it is really very important to me that I should reach New York speedily," he observed, as he drew out the lucky number, fourteen.

Then Clayton put in his hand, and drew without a moment's hesitation. Wellard gave a sigh of relief as he saw that, like himself, his hated rival had drawn a blank.

"Well," said Clayton, smiling urbanely, though he was desperately disappointed, "it's bad for me, but it's good for some one else—that must be my consolation."

The next to draw was a young man who had been "cabled" for by his family, to attend what might prove to be the deathbed of his mother. He bowed his head before putting in his hand,

and his lips moved inaudibly. Was he praying? Who shall say? But when he drew out the number *seven*, he said very reverently, "God be thanked!" Then blanks were drawn until O'Sullivan dipped in his hand and brought out Twenty-One! The remaining passengers looked more or less disgusted, realizing that they had no further chance.

"Look here!" exclaimed the last winner, addressing himself generally to those around him. "I'm perhaps not in such a mad hurry to get to New York as some of you. I'm willing to sell my lot!"

"A hundred pounds for it!" almost instantly screamed Wellard.

"Two hundred!" said Clayton.

"Two-fifty!" from another passenger.

"Three hundred!" cried Wellard in desperate excitement.

"Four hundred!" said Clayton, without raising his voice above its low musical pitch.

The rivals seemed now to have the bidding to themselves.

"Five hundred pounds!" almost shouted Wellard.

"Six hundred," remarked Mr. Clayton, fingering his watch-chain, as if the matter were one of supreme indifference to him.

"Eight hundred!" cried Wellard, as triumphantly as if that advance must indeed make the prize his.

"A thousand," observed Clayton, still seemingly unmoved; and swift as lightning, and before Wellard could make any advance, O'Sullivan cried, "Done!"

Most of the passengers felt inclined to cheer, for Clayton had made himself a favourite with all. O'Sullivan had determined almost from the first into whose hands he would deliver the lucky number; but—like many gentlemen of his country—he stood in need of cash, and resolved to improve the opportunity. A thousand pounds, and got so easily too, seemed to him a fortune.

Clayton drew out his cheque-book, wrote a cheque for the amount, handed it to O'Sullivan, and taking graceful leave of his fellow-voyagers, went on board the waiting *City of Philadelphia*, and was soon steaming on his way to New York.

Who shall picture the despair, the rage, of the rival left behind? He had seen that O'Sullivan had favoured Clayton, and he could have killed him! He was a little man, was O'Sullivan. Ah, with what ease, with what *great* ease, thought Wellard, could he not have flung him overboard! as he eyed him standing by the ship's side, a smirk of intense self-satisfaction on his face, probably caused by the thought of the revenge he had taken for the rejection of those well-meant friendly advances of his. Moral! Never be rude to any one at sea, since you never know when you may not find yourself in his power.

There was little wind of any kind, and what there was was a head-wind. It seemed to Wellard as if the ship *crawled*—and in truth her progress was a very slow one. The other passengers noticed him among themselves, and wondered what was the secret of his desperate hurry to get to New York? But let us draw a veil over his sufferings and follow Mr. Clayton, with whom things always seemed to go well. His reflections were as pleasing as those of his former friend were unpleasant. He

owed his luck partly to his behaviour to O'Sullivan, whom the rest of the passengers had seemed disposed either to shun or chaff. He prided himself on his genial manners, and more than once before they had stood him in good stead. He felt that gratitude to them which a huntsman feels to the horse who has carried him well. He might betray another's confidence, or elope with his best friend's wife. He had heard low-born men bully waiters and abuse servants, but he had never done so. He might discharge a servant for some trivial fault, no matter how much the man repented it, or what the situation meant to him; but he never used a harsh word or a loud tone. His manners were as irreproachable as his long slender fingers, terminating in beautifully-shaped nails.

Never before in all his life had he so thoroughly enjoyed the last half of an ocean voyage. They reached New York after a fine passage of the average length. The captain of the *City of Philadelphia* said that the *City of Liverpool*, under the most favourable circumstances, could not get in for a week yet, and he should not be surprised if she were much longer than that—a statement which gave Mr. Clayton very much satisfaction; for he did not want to hurry matters too much.

He drove at once to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and there enjoyed the usual excellent dinner, and after the meal an equally excellent cigar. He then went to bed early, devoutly thankful to be once more on shore.

The next morning he made up his mind not to call at the Fairfields that day, as he had plenty of time before him. To call the very day after landing might look a little premature; and he was tired; and he had a little business to attend to in Wall Street. In the evening he went to a theatre. The next afternoon saw him as usual faultlessly attired, and proceeding at a leisurely pace in the direction of Thirty Fourth St., the one in which the Fairfields lived.

"Mrs. and Miss Fairfield were at home;" and he went up the stairs with a beating heart, but calm self-composed manner.

"Mr. Clayton!" announced the servant, throwing open the door; and, as that gentleman entered the luxuriously furnished drawing-room, he came as near giving a start as he was ever known to do; for he saw not only Mrs. Fairfield and her lovely daughter, looking lovelier than ever, but he also saw, incredible as it may seem, the unmistakable face and figure of his rival, Walter Wellard, at Alice Fairfield's side.

"Why, Wellard!" he said, when he had exchanged greetings with the ladies, "I thought we left you on the *City of Liverpool*?"

"So you did! All the same, I reached here before the *Philadelphia*! It is not at all so wonderful as it seems. You had not left us very long when we were overtaken by the *Ocean Greyhound*. You know she's the swiftest ship on any of the lines. She offered to take six of us, and this time luck was on my side! Moreover she outdid herself, and beat her own record. It was the fastest run yet known."

"You are in America for some time?" said Miss Fairfield, addressing Clayton. It seemed to him that she spoke rather coldly. When he rose to go, Wellard said he would accompany him, and the two left the house together.

"Well," began Wellard, lighting a cigarette as

soon as they got into the street, "I guess that thousand pounds of yours was rather thrown away!"

"That I grant you," replied Clayton. "But as to other things, we shall see."

"We shall see," said the other, "that before long Miss Fairfield becomes Mrs. Wellard. Look here, my friend, I may as well tell you that you're out of this. I proposed, and was accepted. She never had thought of you in that way, and when I told her the trick you would have played on me, she put her hands together, and said 'Oh, the sneak!'"

"Indeed?" answered Clayton with assumed indifference. "All the same, if it had not been for that cursedly quick steamer, I think I could have removed her scruples on that point."

But I say, let those laugh who win.

IN BAD HANDS.

A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON,

Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Lazarus in London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAPPY PAIR.

FOLKESTONE MILES did not intrude, after all, upon the society of Foxy Wharton and his son that particular morning on which he had discovered Phil. Discretion was the better part of valour he thought—the better part of a great many things beside valour, if he were going to act as Phil's champion or deliverer. Through his violet glasses he perceived that the boy thought so also—seemed even to warn him not to speak, and as effectually, by the droop of his shoulders and drag of his gait, as by the very forbidding scowl which he had received from Wharton senior.

Making up his mind suddenly to a new and distinct line of policy, Folkestone Miles marched past them both at a smart pace, and went home, thereby leaving, he hoped, some doubt in the mind of Wharton *père* whether there was anything more in him than in the ordinary sea-side lounge. He did not know, however, that Mr. Wharton, one practice night, had followed him and Phil from the church of St. Eustace, Westminster, to Hercules Buildings, taking stock of him all the way, and remembering him always from that time by his thin, pale face, his long hair, and the coloured glasses to his spectacles. He had a fallacious idea that Phil's father had never set eyes upon him before, and, therefore, that he would be able to act presently with considerable success.

Mr. Miles returned to his sea-side lodgings to find Mrs. Miles in grief and great tribulation of spirit. She had not settled down to married life yet, and the vagaries—she could call them nothing better than vagaries, she said—of Mr. Miles had very seriously disheartened her. It was like absolute desertion to have Folkestone flying all over Tenby after minstrels of the Tyrol at a time when she had a right to expect—even demand—his sole and undivided attention.

"It's—it's not a bit like a honeymoon," she cried behind her white pocket-handkerchief. "I was never treated so in all my life. It's dreadful!"

"My precious!" he said, soothingly.

But "my precious" was not to be soothed too quickly by endearing terms, and it was only by appealing to her feelings, by telling the story of Phil Wharton over again from beginning to end, by gently and delicately reminding her that they might have a dear child of their own stolen away some day, and with no human soul to help them find it "ever and ever again," that the excitable young bride became interested in the case, and thought that Folkestone might be excused his eccentric conduct of the morning.

"We will save him, Folkestone," she said at last, "but we will save him together."

"Well, we'll try, at any rate," answered the bridegroom, though he did not quite see the right way to begin, not being blessed or cursed—which is it?—with a particularly fertile imagination.

They must wait and watch, they both considered. The Tyrolese would not, probably, leave the town whilst business was brisk. Mr. Wharton was strong on the point of law, and on the point of possession, and it was difficult to know how to act until Folkestone had had a little talk with Phil. Poor Phil! he thought, walking about with a crutch, and evidently a cripple for life—poor Phil, a prisoner in bad hands, and unable to escape from them! "By Jove, he shall escape though!" cried the organist.

Folkestone Miles and his young wife made many inquiries that day concerning the Tyrolese; they found out that they were lodging, in the small house of a bibulous fisherman, down a back street near the pier—"all of a lump, like a lot of pigs," said their informant—and that they were not particularly amicable amongst themselves after business hours, and were heard quarrelling and swearing and shouting long after their more peaceable neighbours were in bed and trying to sleep. Once the Frenchman was heard crying "murder," but as he turned up on the sands in the morning, smiling and gesticulating as usual, it was set down as a little pleasantry on his part during the previous night. And once Mr. Moriega was heard striking something or some one with a strap, and it was thought it might be his little son, as he did not sing the next day, and was at home with toothache, "poor little fellow," the father explained, with a deep sigh, to those who had missed him and inquired after him.

The general opinion of the working classes of Tenby—those who knew the Tyrolese in their hours of leisure—was that they were a bad lot, and the sooner the town was rid of them, the better. "If the swells only knew what a gang they were, they wouldn't pitch their money at them quite so freely," was the verdict pronounced, but the swells would pitch away their money, and the Tyrolese were surely prospering, although there was nothing to show for it particularly, except some straggling figures reeling homewards late at night down the narrow, shadowy street wherein they lurked.

"This makes my blood boil, Fanny," said the organist at supper—in their smart first-floor lodgings on the North Cliff—and flourishing his

knife and fork bravely above his head; "the boy is kept a prisoner—treated badly—half killed—I'm sure of it."

"Yes, dear—but please don't shout so. They'll hear you in the road."

"And perhaps they are watching us, my darling, as we are watching them," he said.

"Oh! don't say that, Folkestone, you make me so dreadfully nervous. Hadn't we better shut the windows?"

Fanny Miles left the supper-table at once and approached the French windows, opening on to a balcony, where this happy couple had intended to sit lovingly and quietly day after day and watch the great green, restless sea, and the oyster boats sailing in and out with the tides, and the white gulls scudding from cliff to wave, and from wave to cliff again, and the happy pleasure-seekers wandering below them and not half so happy as they were. The clock in the tower of the old church was striking eleven as she stepped timidly on to the balcony and peered down into the dusky road. They were living at the upper end of the town, and the place was very still and quiet at that hour—the lapping of the sea upon the sands and the soft murmuring of the summer wind alone broke the stillness of that starlit night. There was only a light here and there behind the blinds of the houses in the terraces sloping towards the pier—people were tired and had gone early to roost, and there was but one living soul in the far distance—a primitive looking policeman, grey bearded and bent a little askew, who was toddling along the middle of the road, with his little cane in his hands like an antediluvian "masher."

"I had no idea it was so late," said Fanny, "I had no idea—Yah!" she shrieked out, dashing back, all legs and wings, into the drawing-room, bringing the heart of Folkestone Miles into his throat and curdling every drop of blood in his body. "Mercy!—save me!—fire—thieves! help!" Then she fell into the arms of her lord and husband, and hid her head upon his manly waistcoat.

"My dear, what is it? Pray compose yourself," he entreated; "how you've frightened me!—I've run the fork through my upper lip—what is it? Pray don't kick, my love! what can—"

"The balcony. Somebody creeping up it! oh, shut the windows!" she screamed; "for heaven's sake lock the windows, Folkestone, we shall all be murdered!"

"No—no—wait a moment! Don't shut me out, oh! don't shut me out," cried a shrill voice, and then Phil Wharton, capless and shoeless, and with his velvet jacket torn across the arm, where he had encountered a nail in climbing up the trellis-work beneath the balcony, tumbled into the room and ran panting and scared towards his old friend.

CHAPTER XL.

A VERY STRANGE BOY.

"PHIL—my poor Phil," exclaimed Folkestone, "you have got away then. How did you get here? Where's—the crutch?" he asked, after a moment's hesitation.

"I haven't got it. I don't want it," exclaimed Phil, speaking very hurriedly. "May I draw down the blinds? It's safer."

Folkestone nodded, and Phil ran back and pulled the blinds down before the windows. Meanwhile Mrs. Miles had been deposited in an arm-chair, and was slowly recovering from her alarm.

"To think you've got away," said Folkestone, shaking hands heartily with Phil, "and now—and now—what are we to do with you?"

"I haven't got away yet," cried the boy. "I have only come to see you, Mr. Miles."

"But—"

"But let me speak, please, sir. I haven't much time. I want to get back before they miss me. Don't you see that?" he said.

"I don't see anything very plainly," answered the bewildered organist.

"I am so glad to find you—to know you are here and will help me presently. I am so glad!" Phil exclaimed again; "it's the old times come back to see you—the dear old times in Lambeth when you and I—" and then a lump rose in Phil's throat and he could not get on any further.

"Take it more quietly, boy. Sit down, there's a good fellow, and let us understand the position, and what is to be done. Where have you been all this while?" asked Folkestone. "What have they been doing to you that you never wrote to us, or sent any of us a line?"

"I wrote as soon as I could get the chance; there was no chance for months; and the letters came back to the address I'd put upon them. You had all gone away, my aunt, Mr. Broadbrook, you. I wrote to all of you."

"When was that?"

"Six months ago—nearly."

"Yes," said Folkestone Miles thoughtfully, "we had all gone then."

"Your aunt—"

"Yes, yes, I know, sir. Don't tell me again. She's dead," he said, sorrowfully. "They knew that soon afterwards, and they told me, thinking I should settle down amongst them, having no one to care for and to fret after any more."

"And why did you not write earlier?" asked the young wife.

"I'll tell you as soon as I've got my breath, ma'am," Phil replied, and Mr. Miles noticed that he was still panting from his recent efforts to approach them, and looking considerably exhausted.

Folkestone poured him out a glass of ale, which he sipped at and then set aside again.

"It has struck eleven, hasn't it?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I must be back before twelve. Before he," he added, with a shudder, "comes home."

"Your father?" said Mr. Miles interrogatively.

"Yes—my father," he replied.

"The wretch—the awful wretch," cried Folkestone indignantly.

"Yes, he is an awful wretch," said Phil with grave deliberation, "that is, everybody says so. But we won't speak of him just now, please. There isn't time."

"Well—well," said the organist, "it would take a long time to reckon him up, I daresay. How did you fall into his hands? How did I manage to miss you on that night, Phil?"

"I'll tell you in a moment, sir," said Phil hurriedly, "and then the whole story another day when—when I'm safe. For," he added, lowering his voice to a whisper, as though there

might be eavesdroppers in that very house, "I am not safe at present."

"I hope you are, boy."

"No, not yet," he answered sadly, "it has not come yet."

"What hasn't come?"

"The chance of getting away from them. They would follow me—they would kill me."

"We'll see about that," said the organist with a cheery laugh. "Kill you, indeed!"

But the boy did not laugh in return, only stared at the speaker with his great eyes.

"They were waiting for me outside the church that night," said Phil, by way of explanation of last year's disappearance. "That's how they got hold of me, although I struggled very hard. There were two or three men, and there was a cab ready to pitch me into, and to be driven away with me. They were determined to have me, Mr. Miles, and that's how it was done. They hid me in a house in a street that seemed somewhere near St. Eustace, for we weren't long in getting there, and then they found my leg was broken. You may remember, Mr. Miles, it was not strong just then, and in my struggles it snapped."

"Poor little chap," said Folkestone sympathetically. "Here, take some more beer, do. And the doctor—didn't the doctor—"

"They never sent for a doctor. That would not have done. One of them had been a medical student, and he set my leg, after a fashion."

"And crippled you for life?"

"Almost. Although," he added, sinking his voice to a whisper again, after the new habit he had contracted with the wild beings amongst whom his life had been lately spent, "I am not so bad as they believe. I don't want the crutch, but I pretend I do, so that they shall fancy, sir, I can't move without it; and every night they take the crutch away, and think I'm safe."

"I see. That's pretty cunning for a young one, that is," said Mr. Miles admiringly.

"I have been amongst cunning people," answered the boy frankly; "and I haven't improved. That wasn't likely, was it?"

"Well, no."

"I have dropped awfully down. But I'll get back again—I will, sir, if you'll help me," cried Phil.

"Why, of course I'll help you."

"Thank you. I didn't know. Everybody has seemed so much against me that I didn't know how to trust in anybody."

"Poor fellow. Take some more beer."

"No, thank you," said Phil; "I won't have any more of that, or I shall go home like father, drunk," he said with another visible shudder; "and when he's drunk he's very dreadful. At his worst then—always."

"I don't doubt it in the least," said Folkestone in reply.

"For six months I never got a chance, night or day, of writing to anybody, of telling anybody, how I had been snared," Phil Wharton explained further. "When I was well enough to leave my bed and limp about, they took me away, and we went from town to town earning our living as you see. My father never let me out of his sight; it is only lately he thinks I have got used to him, and not likely to escape. And I did not know where to escape to when the letters came back

and you were all gone—every one of you! I gave up then. I should not have minded them killing me for trying to find one friend; I should have been glad enough to die and get it over."

"And now you are going to live, and grow famous, perhaps. For it's a wonderful voice, Phil," said the organist; "and something must be done with it soon, instead of wearing and tearing it all to pieces with those singing scoundrels."

"That's what father says."

"Your father appears to have studied the matter very deeply," said Folkestone Miles caustically.

"Yes; and he's proud of me, after his way," said Phil, to his listener's surprise. "Sometimes I think he even cares for me a bit—as a father should, I mean. But," with an odd little sigh, "I suppose that's all fancy."

"Most likely," assented Mr. Miles.

"Though he lost his voice when he was young, he seems to know as much as you do about music, Mr. Miles—and I haven't gone back in that," he added, with a hollow little laugh. "It would have been better for me if I had."

"Why?"

"They would have turned me adrift, then, I think," Phil answered; "and I should have got back to London, and found some of you."

"Perhaps you would."

"How's Mr. Broadbrook, and Mrs. Broadbrook, and all the rest of them?" he asked, with all a boy's eagerness for news, "you know, I daresay."

"They have gone away. I don't know what has become of them," was the reply.

"And you—married?"

"Yes, and down here for my honeymoon, Phil."

"You're a—bit—better off than you were then?" he inquired with some delicate hesitation.

"Yes. I have a better church, and I have five-and-twenty pupils."

"I am glad to hear it," said Phil; "I wish I was one of the pupils."

"So you shall be—if you will."

"Yes, presently—who knows," cried Phil with his eyes sparkling at the prospect, and then becoming full of thought again; "some of these days, I hope."

"And now, what is to be done?" asked Folkestone, "will you stop here and defy them? Shall I ask the landlady to take care of you, to hide you? They'll never guess you're here."

"Oh! yes they will. They know who you are, and they can easily find out, as I have, where you're lodging. Father knows you very well. He said he should probably cut my throat if I had anything to say to you," said the boy coolly.

"Oh! good gracious," exclaimed Mrs. Miles.

"But he always talks like that; that's his way, ma'am," said Phil apologetically on his sire's behalf.

"And a very nasty way of talking too. Folkestone," to her husband, "he had better not go back. What is the law about it?"

"Smothered if I know," said Folkestone, rubbing his hair up the wrong way in his perplexity, "and I don't much care. I'm going to defy the law."

"There's a dear," said Mrs. Miles admiringly; "I thought you would."

"Yes, Phil, you had better stop. We could get away in the morning."

"No, we couldn't," said Phil, who seemed to

possess the most practical mind of the three, "they would watch this house, and watch the station. That's why I have come—to ask you to take no more notice of me yet awhile, to leave me with them just the same—to let me be quite sure of the next step before I make it. In the night like this I can come again, to-morrow or the next night even, and tell you what I have arranged."

"You talk as if you hadn't quite made up your mind to get away," said Folkestone regarding him for the first time somewhat doubtfully.

"I think I have; oh! yes, I'm sure I have."

"They treat you badly."

"Yes, they treat me badly, most of them," he added with a reserve.

"And life much longer with them means going utterly to ruin."

"Yes, that's it," assented Phil.

"Then you must get away."

"Yes, I will get away," said the boy starting to his feet, "and you will help me. That's arranged unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless anything should happen. They might find me out coming here. I might die; there are such lots of things to stop me after all. But," he cried, "I am so glad I've seen you, and found you well and happy. I am so very glad. God bless you and this lady, sir; and thank you both for thinking of me. Good-bye."

And without a moment's further hesitation, Phil shook hands with them, darted to the window, drew up the blinds, and passed through to the balcony, over which he climbed and disappeared. Always very handy at climbing and getting in and out of windows, this Phil Wharton.

Husband and wife went to the balcony and watched him speeding along in the shadow of the houses, and looking very unlike a cripple at that moment.

"He's keeping something back," said the organist, "he seems almost loth to leave them at the last."

"Poor boy, he is confused."

"I should not be surprised if he stops with them, for some reason or other."

"Impossible."

But it seemed as if Folkestone Miles was not very far from the truth in his new and startling surmise. At the same time the next night when the town was still and most folk seemed to have locked up and gone to bed, Phil Wharton came like a cat up the trellis-work again, and through the window left open to receive him. He came in looking very white and scared still.

"I have altered my mind, sir," he said; "don't think the worst of me. But I'm not going to leave them."

(To be concluded next number.)

ROMANCE IN A RED COAT.

BY PAUL BENISON.

IT was that very enjoyable moment to the people of the house when a highly successful party has just concluded. The ball was one of a series Lady Woodbridge had whimsically called

her "Spectre dances," for the guests, like ghosts, were expected to vanish at daybreak—which, as Puck informs us, is the canonical time for them to do so. Thus, under the fiction of a restraint, the party was kept well together through the night. It was past the middle of May, and the sun rose just about four o'clock; and so, at the booming of a sonorous pendule, the band suddenly struck up the National Anthem, and, by a preconcerted lowering of lamps and opening of windows, an artificial confusion was created, and a merry hurrying and hiding took place, as if light were detection; and in half an hour's time (for the party was choice rather than crowded) the last carriages were leaving the door of the old family mansion in Cavendish Square.

Her hospitable labours over, Lady Woodbridge withdrew into her boudoir, where she was joined by her only daughter, Lady Theresa Fay.

The windows were open, and the horizontal sunlight, piercing through a large tree in the enclosure at the back, cast tangled, quivering shadows on the wall; there was even a twittering of birds, and the sweet breath of morning entered.

The two were alone, for the Earl had persuaded a friend to go with him to the smoking-room.

Fresh tea had been brought, and mother and daughter nestled together for a chat.

"Really, Theresa, Lord Oundle paid you great attention to-night."

"He dances very badly."

"A marquis may dance badly. But he is such a rising man. Clacton says that he is sure to be in the Cabinet some day."

"He is very stupid."

"Yes, in conversation; but he can get up his subjects for the House. Have you ever turned him over in your mind, dear child?"

"Mamma darling, how could I, with George on my hands?"

"That is just it. But now I want you honestly—take some of this seed-cake—to tell me how you really feel about George."

Lady Theresa leaned back, and looked at the ceiling, and the light fell on her face. Her features were good, her complexion admirable, her brown hair profuse; she owned, too, expressive hazel eyes and a pretty mouth; but the general impression given by the countenance was not favourable. The look was uncertain; the smile, though it produced loveable dimples, was not of pronounced frankness.

"Well, of course I like George," she said, after a pause. "Poor boy! he was so sorry not to be with us to-night; it was his turn at the Tower. Oh, of course I like George exceedingly, but—"

"But what, child?" asked Lady Woodbridge, eagerly.

"I think we got engaged without quite considering what we were about—either of us."

"It is not known," said the other, "out of our immediate circle, that you are engaged. George is so shy, he did not wish it. Of course, your own feelings must be consulted, but if, without a great wrench, you could give him up, I think he might be soothed and consoled, and the thing could be completely explained to him. It cannot much matter to him whom he marries."

"I do not know that. A man who is rich, handsome, and will be a baronet, has a right to be particular in his choice of a wife. It would not matter much about me, perhaps, because my engagement to George was the result of circumstances more than anything else. But I am afraid he would feel a rupture deeply."

"Theresa, my dear, he is very stolid and unromantic."

"Silent, certainly. But I am almost sure he loves me to distraction, as the phrase is."

"He would get over his disappointment—and really a marquis, and a politician; it is a chance!"

"Of course. Lord Oundle is the sort of man whose career would bring one to the front very much. But George, poor fellow! I should not like to wound his feelings."

"You need not do that. You are clever, you could find out some way of gently severing the tie. I wish no harm, I am sure, to George, but there are lots of other girls for him. We cannot settle anything now; but, do think it over, Theresa. I am sure Lord Oundle means business. I hope he won't hear about George. Kiss me, darling, and let us go to bed."

The George alluded to in this conversation was the eldest son of Sir George Beltravers, a Yorkshire baronet, of large property. He was in the Coldstream Guards, but of course only as a temporary measure. He had been thrown a great deal, as a boy, with Lady Theresa, for his mother, Lady Beltravers, was a sister of Lady Woodbridge, and he had fallen in love with her when he arrived at years of indiscretion. And shortly after the fêtes which were given to the county when he came of age, he became engaged to the girl.

The old baronet did not much like the idea of cousins marrying, nor did he consider that there need be any hurry about settling at all; but still the Woodbridge family was small, there was money, and no objection existed from a worldly point of view. So the engagement was sanctioned on a sort of tacit admission that it was not a pressing matter; for both the parties were so young—George twenty-one, and the girl nineteen—it might be carried out with deliberation. And as George was a man who particularly disliked fuss, he had asked that the engagement should not be mentioned, except to family friends; and, in point of fact, it was not generally known.

George was a well-grown fellow, with brown hair, but blue eyes; a rich complexion, inclining to red; a dark down on his upper lip, which he called moustache; and a sleepy, heavy look about him; but with no trace of temper or sensuality in the expression. He was an exceptionally silent man; hardly ever read even a newspaper, and seemed to enjoy the largest cigar he could find as an excuse for the longest period of taciturnity. There was one subject, however, which roused him, and that was—horses. He was not only an excellent rider and driver, but he never forgot a horse when he had once seen it, and, with the quickest eye for the beauties of his favourite animals, possessed the quickest perception also of their defects. The most skillful firing never escaped his notice, and his hand, gently passed downwards, detected with certainty the incipient splint; whilst the doctored mouth betrayed at once to him its disreputable

secrets. More than this—he loved and felt for the horse. He would speak to coachmen in the street who were showing temper with the reins or the whip; and an overloaded coal-cart oppressing an animal on an incline made him angry and overbearing. He was not above borrowing satire from omnibus conductors, and would use their favourite taunt of “Now, then, gardener!” even to West-end drivers who were showing incapacity; indeed, he would embellish the phrase with effective adjectives.

He was liked by his companions, though of course it was admitted he was not lively; but he could do all the usual things—looked well, dressed well and was silent in gentlemanly English; and what more was required?

Lady Theresa had been enjoined by her mother to think over her position towards George, and the apparent susceptibility of Lord Oundle; and she reflected seriously enough on the certainty that she should only be a country baronet’s wife with George. He would never rise above the herd of bucolic magnates. He might, indeed, be put up at an election, might read a few lines of speech in the bottom of his hat, and might, for that matter, be returned; but he would never be heard in the House. There was nothing to prevent his being M.F.H., and he would serve the office doubtless with success, and M.F.H. was something. But then the wife of M.F.H.? Not much. Now, on the contrary, Lord Oundle was rather a prig—not a very loveable man; not a man of expansive thought, but he was a man of steady ambition, capable of acquiring knowledge, could say what he meant intelligibly at any rate; and he was one who was determined to turn his great accidental advantages to good account in magnifying himself; and Lady Theresa felt sure that in connecting her career with his, she should be on the high road to becoming a personage herself. And the result of all her cogitations was that she determined to withdraw from her engagement with George, if she could do so, without seriously wounding him. It was her wish, to do her credit, to effect matters gently. She had an instinct that she was deeply loved by this undeveloped, inarticulate nature; and she resolved to exert all her finesse to dissolve the tie between them, in a smooth, easy, natural manner.

The afternoon after the ball, Lord Oundle called and stayed quite an hour. Lady Theresa was confirmed in her designs.

And now there came shortly afterwards a fête in the Botanical Gardens, Regents Park; and George was of course to accompany the Woodbridge party, consisting indeed only of the Earl and Countess, Lord Clacton, the eldest son, and Lady Theresa; the other son being away with his regiment. Lord Oundle was very earnest on a scheme for a commission to inquire into the effect of the introduction of blue points on our oyster market, and could not be present. The scene was simply enchanting. The smooth lawns, the delicate foliage displayed in the amethyst lights, the crowds of well-dressed people, the greenhouses and tents where, in the gorgeously developed plants, Nature showed how imperial she could be, without abating an iota of her pure and harmonious taste. There was a pause. The company divided and turned towards the gates; the band played God save the Queen, and sailing up through the uncovering throng,

an exceedingly ample, good tempered looking lady appeared with a fine military figure by her side. The crowd closed in again and the incident ended. As the night wore on and eleven had struck, Lady Theresa got hold of George, and led him gradually away from the crowd, amongst shrubs and paths winding up to a small eminence. At last they found a seat. It was past the full of the moon, and the orb which slowly uprose, kindling at first behind distant trees, was slightly gibbous. This change of shape has to some fancies a little of the uncanny awe of an eclipse.

“George,” began Lady Theresa, who had prepared the first sentence beforehand. “I have sometimes thought that we were hasty in deciding that the affection of our early years really meant a love which was to last through life.”

“I say Theresa,” cried the other, “draw it mild. You know I am not up to that kind of talk, and it is too bad of you.”

“No, but dear old boy, I am quite serious. We have always loved like brother and sister, and I should like such affection to continue. I see no use in our marriage.”

“No marriage!” cried George. “By gad, that would be like Nap, with pitching five not allowed. Why, that’s the whole thing.” He was not alive yet to serious intention on his companion’s part.

“We are cousins, you must remember, George; and your father thinks that an objection. And mamma does not really approve of the match, only for your sake she says nothing. Besides, it is not fair to you, you had seen so little of other girls when you took a fancy to me.”

“I say, Theresa,” broke in the other, with a faltering voice, “you do not mean what you are talking about?”

“I really do,” continued Lady Theresa. “I assure you I shall love you quite as much as ever. You know I admire you. You are attractive, you are good-looking, you are manly, and you have always wished to please me. Now, do me this great kindness—let me remain your favourite cousin.”

There was a silence of a minute or two, and then George said—

“But what is to become of me?”

The simple, melancholy way in which this was uttered was exceedingly touching, and Lady Theresa could not but feel pained.

“Dear boy!” she said, and pressed his hand, “you are quite young—young even for your years, and you have a bright time a-head. You do not suppose I relinquish such a man without suffering? But I truly believe that our people will be greatly relieved if we make a sacrifice.”

“Since when has this change come over you?” asked George.

“That is just what I want you to understand, George. No change has taken place. I have loved you, I do love you, and I will love you—only as a cousin.”

“You know, I suppose,” said George, “that I have set my heart upon you?”

“I am quite sure, dear fellow, that you are sincere. It is not in your nature to say you loved me, if you did not do so.”

“Such a poor hand am I at talking,” George continued, “that I cannot properly explain, as people with the gift of the gab could, that the whole thing of my life is your love.”

"You are very good to say so; it is just like you. But I do not want to withdraw my love from your life. I hope you will make me your dearest friend."

"I feel quite dazed," said the other. "It is like going to sleep in church, and not knowing where you are when you first wake. It cannot be true. Not marry you, Theresa?"

"Love me, but not marry me."

The poor fellow sat quite still for a while, and then suddenly threw both his arms round the girl's neck, and kissed her passionately. She felt his hot tears of anguish on her cheek.

"Well, well, George," she faltered, "it need not be decided to-night. I do not want to hurt your feelings. You must try and think quite calmly over the matter. There are footsteps approaching. Let us go down again."

Later on, they parted amicably enough at the door of the Cavendish Square house; but George returned to his quarters with a heavy heart. Unfortunately for him, he took the wrong course. If the next morning he had sought Lady Theresa and entreated her not to cast him off, there is no saying, perhaps, what his fervent devotion might not have effected; but in an evil moment he took pen in hand. He had no idea of writing; could not even spell, and had constantly to go into the next room, where there was a Webster, before he could finish a note of two sides.

The girl was mistress of the situation; as long as she could keep George at pen's length she was safe. She was obliged to show his letter to darling mamma, she said, and then, of course, mamma wrote herself, and the Earl (who was a mere cipher, and controlled entirely by his wife) wrote to Sir George. And when the great oyster question would permit, Lord Oundle was very attentive, and after one of his visits, Lady Theresa wrote an additional letter of great affection and consolation to dear George.

And it ended, as may be supposed, in the complete severance of the engagement, which had been known to a few, suspected by others, but had never formed a subject of much interest to anybody.

Lady Theresa had besought George to continue his intimacy as a friend of the family, but he had begun to guess whither the Oundle acquaintance was tending, and he stayed away, and right glad was Lady Woodbridge that he did so. And now, the young guardsman having no saint in his shrine, rather astonished his comrades by going in for a more reckless life than he had shown a fancy for previously. But he had no heart for such pursuits, and soon abandoning that course, fell into moody and solitary ways. There was a noticeable change in his appearance; unmistakable care and chagrin stamped his face, and his taste in dress was distinctly on the decline. His people did not regularly come up for the season. Sir George put in an appearance for a week or two at Limmers, but Lady Beltravers was a great stay-at-home. Hearing, however, that her son was ailing, she thought a comprehensive act of attention would be to order a Bond Street chemist to send him a handsome medicine chest. This accordingly arrived at his quarters, and was stowed away out of sight to prevent ridicule.

The summer rolled by, the season drew to its close, and in the last week of July it cozed out

that the Marquis of Oundle was going to be married to the only daughter of the Earl of Woodbridge. There was no reason why the event should be postponed, but settlements required some little time, and it was not till late in August, when the fashionable world had departed, that the day was actually fixed. Many friends had, however, promised to run up from the country to be present. The church selected was one rather out of the way from the usual paths of high life; but the incumbent was an aristocrat, and the ritual excessively ornate and scenic, which Lady Theresa liked, and Lord Oundle did not mind. The sacred building stood just out of a broad thoroughfare in the Regent's Park direction, and opposite was a row of high, shabby houses, each with a strip of disordered garden before it. Most of them were private hotels, or were arranged for the reception of boarders.

The marriage was to take place on a Tuesday, and on Monday evening a hansom cab pulled up before one of the row. Both on the garden-gate and over the door was marked *Campanella's*. In the midst of the flowerless parterre was a waterless fountain, where a weather-stained nymph sat on a shell, looking forlorn and out of health. A tall young man descended from the vehicle, dressed in a tweed suit and a soft hat, and with a small valise in his hand.

This was George, who, in a peregrination the night before, had chosen the place as commanding a view of the church, and had engaged a front bed-room at the top of the house. By a difficult ascension, he reached this large, but faded and dingy, apartment, and Madame Campanella, before closing his door, informed him that *table d'hôte* was over, but tea would be at nine o'clock; and there was genteel company in the hotel, including two young ladies, who sang duets beautiful.

But George did not show, to the disappointment of the vocalists, who had watched him on the stairs through their key-hole, had put on extra ribbons, and were pungently scented with Chypre, and prepared to create a sensation. The next morning, he went out at eight; sadly changed, —with sunken eyes, pale cheeks, and blanched lips, but still impressive from his fine stature. He walked about the streets, and at length passed into the church, and remarked the flowers and other decorations. He asked a vergier where the bride would stand, and himself occupied a position close to the spot, for a few minutes.

When he returned he asked for coffee in his room, and after he had taken it, he searched for some letters in his valise. Longer ones, those on the subject of the rupture, he tore up. Others, very slight ones, such as "Dearest George, come for us in good time, ever your T." he tied with ribbon and put in his bosom. He had no watch or rings; they were left at home in a parcel, directed to a chum. After this, he sat quietly at the window for a long time. At length he suddenly arose. It was half past ten. "It will be unbearable to hear the bells," he said aloud. "I will not wait." He rang for soda and brandy. It was brought. Then he stood before the window, thinking, and muttering some words in a low complaining voice, and again abruptly turning round, with a determinate air, poured out

the soda over a bottom of brandy, and hurrying to his valise, took a squab, stoppered bottle, belonging to his new chest and marked *Poison, Laudanum*, and emptied it, about an ounce—into the tumbler. Then he seated himself calmly in the arm-chair and swallowed the decoction. The horrible depression he had felt wore off, to his great surprise. He was expecting immediate stupefaction: but he felt brighter and indeed excited. He seized his hat and descended again into the streets. There must have been some mistake. What had he taken? In his hurried walk, he observed on a door—Dr. Blanco, Consultations from nine to one o'clock. Should he go inside and say exactly what had happened, and ask for aid? No, if a mistake had taken place, the whole thing would be ridiculous. He would wait till he felt ill. Past eleven by the clocks, and as he came in sight of the church, he observed a carriage and the servants with nosebags. It was coming off at last—the hated marriage! He would go to his room and watch the scene. The comfortless, faded apartment again. But how was it he was not stupified? He went to the window, drew the chair close to it, and looked out. The carriages were coming in quick succession. The bride would soon arrive.

But he felt very strange now,—what numbness was creeping over him? He had better run, whilst he could, to Dr. Blanco. Too late; the light was fading,—objects were melting into an indistinct glimmer, he was turning into stone. At once, he is heavily asleep. And there—motionless, statue-like, impassive, silent, he sat and sat, his arms down, his head gently resting back, his eyes closed, his jaw a little sinking; but over his skin a blue tint gradually spreading. The quarter to noon had struck, and shortly after, the church bells which had been previously rung up, went smoothly off into exhilarating changes, for the Marchioness was being conducted by her husband to her carriage. And over the figure seated at the window, a shudder passed—for a moment slightly convulsing the features and agitating the hands—and then all was still. Poor George was dead!

LORD TENNYSON.

I.

BECAUSE Song's brightest stars have crowned his head,

And to his soul their loveliest dreams unfurled,
Because since Shakespeare joined the deathless dead,

No loftier Poet has entranced the world.

II.

Because Olympian food, ethereal wine,

Are his who fill's Apollo's golden lute,
Why should he not from his high heaven incline,
To take from lowlier hands their proffered fruit?

III.

Free is the earnest offering! he as free

To condescend toward the gift they bring;

No Dead-Sea apple is a lord's degree,
To foul the lips of him, our Poet-King.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

Coppe Hill, Georgia, U.S.A.

OYSTERS.

ALTHOUGH the person who devoured the first oyster is credited with having possessed extraordinary courage, the feat was found to be so agreeable, that now the question has worked round, and he who could resist eating the last, if ever we should be reduced to such an extremity, would prove himself quite as brave, or even braver. This test of moral valour is just possible, as of late the demand for the favourite mollusc has so far exceeded the supply that "natives" especially have risen to an almost fabulous price, which over stimulates the trade in them, and threatens to clear them off our coasts.

To look at the mature oyster, protected by its thick, strong walls, no one would fancy that it knew anything but an existence of inactivity and glorious ease. Judging by appearance there is not a sign visible that it ever excited or exerted itself. The lazy looking thing seems to have made self-indulgence the sole object of its being, and laughed itself into wrinkles at watching the ceaseless activity and worry of other creatures in their efforts to sustain life. A dull, sullen fellow you picture him, who, having had no troubles of his own, could have had no thought or pity for the trouble of others, and therefore you lay him open with the knife without a shade of regret. As you do this the poor wretch groans and quietly dies, lamenting your ignorance. If you had only known what an eventful life his had been at one time, when he was young, you would at least swallow him with the feeling that he deserved a kinder fate. To gratify your palate he had run hundreds of hair-breadth escapes, withstood a host of foes, and conducted himself generally in a way to deserve your good opinion and best thanks. His family history, you may be interested to learn, dated back from a certain spring time, a season, said to be so favourable to love, that "the icy bosom feels the sacred fire." At any rate the mother oyster must have experienced something of the kind, for soon afterwards she generated a large quantity of a milk-white fluid, that under the microscope, might be found to consist of an incredible number of almost invisible eggs. These, unlike most other marine animals, she did not at once abandon to the mercy of the winds and waves, but retained them within the maternal walls, until they were hatched. Even when obliged to send them into the world on their own account, she gave a parting token of affection, by letting them forth in a dense cloud of ejected matter, that spread through the water and concealed them, while they made their first acquaintance with the conditions of the new life. On being released they set out far and near to seek their fortune. At this stage they differed materially from the parent, and instead of adopting a stationary or permanent resting-place, they fitted about through the water with ceaseless activity. To do this, of course they required a swimming apparatus, different from anything to be much observed on a mature oyster. You have only to catch a youngster in order to see how it performs a feat that becomes impossible later on in life. Growing out of the shell, on each side of the mouth, are two tufts that look like seaweed. These are covered with countless minute microscopic hairs, called *cilia*, which move in-

cessantly up and down, and so enable the young oyster to wander about at discretion. Too much liberty is well known to be ruinous to young folk, and oysters are no exception to this rule. Of the million or so belonging to a single brood, that leave their mother full of hope and promise, nine-tenths of that number at least—terrible thought!—perish prematurely. After having had what is termed a good time of it, the remainder outgrow the frolicsomeness of youth; they sow their wild oats, and then settle down as exemplary, domesticated oysters. When this takes place they do not require their swimming apparatus, which gradually shrinks, and now they become fast to the sea bottom.

The quality and flavour of oysters depend so much on the ground on which they are reared, that "natives," those artificially raised, are esteemed the most. The best grow on submarine rocks, an inferior kind on sandbanks, and the coarsest on muddy bottoms. Until recently they were all supposed to be hermaphrodite, but investigations, carried on in America, have revealed the fact that some kinds at any rate are bi-sexual.

In England, Whitstable is famous for its oysters. The Romans, who were certainly good judges, prized none more highly than those obtained from Kent. It is not at all surprising that a people so eminent in gastronomy should have discovered the secret of how to rear oysters artificially. Pliny mentions a certain Serjius Orata, who made a large income, as Romans often did, out of "natives;" the principal difference in this case being that they were sold as food, not for slaves. As the Americans would say, he ran an artificial oyster bed, a form of business which must yield pretty handsome incomes across the Atlantic at the present day, considering that a hundred thousand pounds worth, or thereabout, per annum, of American oysters are sold in London alone.

The question is often asked—Why are not oysters eaten all the year round? Now, there happens to be an ancient prejudice against molesting them during those months which are destitute of the letter "r," and, unlike most prejudices, this one contains reason, if not rhyme. It is a grave offence to use a dredge in the course of—

Those four sad months, wherein is mute
That one mysterious letter that has power
To call the oyster from the vasty deep.

About May and June they spawn, a proceeding that changes their life-blood for the benefit of their posterity, and leaves them in a tough, poor condition. At this time they are unfit for food, which, perhaps, is a blessing, as it prevents their consumption when each mollusc is on the point of giving a chance of existence to a million more. Every true lover of oysters can easily wait until August, when inferior kinds begin to come into the market. Natives are seldom offered for sale before October, from which time they go on improving, and arrive at perfection about Christmas.

While in season, there is probably no other dainty half so enjoyable as oysters, and certainly none that sets such a slight penalty on over-indulgence. They soothe the savage breast, making the most hardened, thankless mortal feel profoundly grateful as he swallows them; nor

does he need to bitterly think of the morrow, although that is the state of mind proper to most other kinds of sensual gratification. If he were known, the person who set the example of eating oysters should have a national monument raised to his memory in every country that enjoys the advantage of his discovery. Compared with him, the most skilful cook is unworthy of a passing notice. In their raw state, oysters call up emotions, besides which the triumphs of the culinary art dwindle into insignificance. Their virtue is not confined to a mere tickling of the palate; it pervades the whole man, moves him to his inmost core, affects the soul as nothing else can, except music or poetry. Indeed, the melting elements of both music and poetry bear the closest analogy to what in the material world we call oysters.

A creature then, that has power to raise man to such lofty heights should surely demand his care and study. However, far from this being the case, the whole family of oysters have been very much neglected, unless it was when some of their members were in demand for supper parties and other festivals. At such times they have always occupied an honourable position, but in their native haunts—that is, at home—they received very slight attention. To supply their physical needs, except in rare instances, was nobody's business in particular, and how could it be when their structure and the conditions under which they could best thrive was so little understood? But now we are beginning to learn something of their organization. Though not fully endowed with all the senses of higher forms, they appear to have a diffuse sense of touch, and they can hear. There is no outward eye perceptible; still they are exceedingly sensitive to every change of light, from which may be reasoned their possession of a modified form of sight. On the other hand, the ear is very fully developed, an interesting organ, consisting of a number of diminutive grains shut up in a transparent cell, which go dancing in active motion with every sound that strikes the outer wall. There is a nervous system of a simple kind, which, although it does not terminate in a brain, shows that the bivalves can feel and enjoy. The heart, again, with its two chambers, is no doubt, an important organ for keeping the colourless blood in perpetual motion. What many persons take to be sea-water is in reality the vitalizing fluid.

Beds and banks of natural oysters are found on all the coasts of the temperate and torrid zones, sometimes stretching for miles together, and rising so high in some places that ships are wrecked on their crests. They evidently date from a very early period in the scale of creation, in proof of which huge heaps of their fossilized remains are frequently cast up by the waves. On the Chilean seaboard, for instance, large areas of petrified oysters, that were raised by volcanic and earthquake action, now tower to the height of sixty feet or more for thirty miles on a stretch. In Berkshire six acres are covered with their shells; but in the States of Massachusetts and Georgia enormous walls may be seen between the land and the ocean, rising from twelve to fifteen feet in height, composed entirely of fossil oysters, with perhaps a layer of their living descendants enjoying life on the top.

If oysters could be subjected to the ordeal of an interview, they would possibly class man among their worst enemies—not but they have others, and quite as deadly, while in appearance utterly contemptible. That hungry, good-for-nothing villain, who monopolises half the baits of fishermen, the starfish, knows oysters to be good fare, and for him the rest is simple. Would that he was content with devouring them as spat, and cease further depredations!—then we might forgive him. The matter is a totally different one when it comes to his feeding on oysters that have grown large enough to be worthy of a human foe. With their impregnable walls, they should keep him at defiance, it might be supposed, even although we are informed on the best authority that the battle is not to the strong. As a tactician, however, the starfish has no rival. His method of assault is strikingly novel, and altogether effective. There is no resisting him. He cannot get a mature oyster into his stomach, of course, so what does he do? He folds his long arms over his prey to keep it in position, applies his mouth closely between the two massive shells, and gradually thrusts his stomach into the oyster! Probably stupefied by some acrid fluid emitted by its assailant, as some naturalists believe, the oyster soon throws the gates of its stronghold open, and allows itself to be literally bagged by the wily starfish.

Another formidable foe is the whelk, whose process of attack, though somewhat prolonged, generally terminates in the overthrow and destruction of the poor oyster. By means of its sharp tongue, which acts like a saw, it operates on the shell, and in time bores a hole that enables it to slay and eat the occupant. Mussels, too, aid in diminishing our supply of oysters. They settle down on them, and in anchoring themselves, spread ropes in every direction, which catch mud and sand, that eventually smother their flat neighbours. Nor is the dredger the oyster's friend, for while he sings them a flattering ditty, he only does so in the belief that it has an irresistible fascination which greatly tends to a good haul. Therefore, he keeps up a wild, monotonous chant, to these words:—

The herring loves the merry moonlight,
The mackerel loves the wind;
But the oyster loves the dredger's song,
For he comes of a gentle kind.

J. SUTHERLAND.

“HER HEART'S DESIRE.”

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of “Deceivers Ever;” “Juliet's Guardian;”
“Pure Gold;” “A North Country Maid,” &c.

CHAPTER III.

A RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

“DON'T be frightened, it's only the engine that has gone off the rails—no one is hurt, only there is another train expected and we must all get out of the carriages; don't be frightened,” Kit added again, with a tenderer ring in his voice, as Violet

tried to stand up, trembling in every limb, “don't be frightened, poor child, there is no danger, I will take care of you.”

“Now, then, be quick, please,” said the guard, appearing at the open door.

Snatching at his fur rug, Kit Barrington hurried the girl out of the train. It was still quite dark, about three o'clock in the morning, but by the flare of the lamps in the carriages you could just see that the stoppage had occurred in a deep cutting. The engine was disabled; it had run a little way off the line, but the high bank had stopped it, and it lay propped up against the side, snorting out red smoke, and sighing like a creature in agony. No one, not even the driver or stoker was hurt, the only danger lay in the fear of being run into by a slower train which was expected to come up, and messengers were at once despatched in both directions, some backwards as hard as ever they could run to signal and stop the oncoming train, and others forwards, towards Penrith, which was supposed to be about sixteen miles distant, to get help and a fresh engine. Meanwhile, the passengers were scrambling up the banks in every direction. The men were dragging up the women, the women were dragging up the frightened children, bags, rugs, bundles, everything that could be laid hold of had been rescued out of the carriages, and many were moaning over the luggage in the van, which it was not possible to get at. The passengers had to make up their minds to spend the rest of the warm summer night under the starry canopy of heaven—not a very great hardship, considering that they were all safe in life and limb. Half supporting, half-carrying Violet up the steep embankment, Kit Barrington reached a little sheltered hollow, about half way up. Whether it was by accident or on purpose, I cannot say, but certain it is that they found themselves aloof from the rest of the passengers, who had all huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep.

“I think this will be sheltered for you,” said Kit, spreading his rug on the ground; “now sit down and let me wrap you up—are you cold?”

“No, not very,” replied poor Violet, whose teeth were chattering, more, however, from fright and nervousness than from cold.

“Poor little girl,” said Kit, gently wrapping her up in the thick folds of the otter skin rug she had so much admired; he tucked it tightly in all around her, and then—who can blame him?—he kept his arm round her by accident.

“Lean against me, so; don't be afraid.”

“Will the luggage be safe?” asked Violet, thinking ruefully of her pretty new dresses.

“Oh, yes, it will be all right, it's only a bore that we shall be delayed; we shall have to sit here till they send us another engine, perhaps for two or three hours—do you mind?” added Kit in a whisper.

Violet was silent. They sat quite still; the hum of the voices of the other passengers to their right grew fainter and fainter; the fire of the disabled engine died down and subsided into a wreath of black smoke; the guard and the stoker had gone off—all had settled down into stillness after the tumult and confusion. Presently the first grey streak of the coming dawn gleamed cold and chill over the great Cumberland hills in front of them, and a sort of flutter, the forerunner of the morn-

ing breeze, hovered in the air. Violet shivered; her companion drew the fur rug closer still around her, and as he did so he bent down over her. How did it happen? Was it a fancy? or did his moustache really brush lightly against that sweet smooth cheek that was so near to him? A little silence, and then Violet all rosy, said in a tremulous whisper.

"Won't you tell me your name?"

"Why do you want to know the name of a poor devil like me?"

"Don't call yourself ugly names," she answered; it rather annoyed her that he should call himself "poor" in any way.

"I shall, probably, never see you again; you need not know my name, remember me only as 'an adventure,' or give me some fancy name out of your head."

"I have done that already," she answered quickly.

"Indeed, may I ask my sobriquet?"

"It is—never mind—it is only a name from a fairy tale," stammered Violet.

"Then you have made a goblin or a gnome of me, or—or—can you have turned me into a fairy prince by chance?" said Kit, with a teasing smile.

"It is a prince, I do believe!" he added, triumphantly, as Violet blushed deeper and deeper.

"Now what is this prince's name? I must know, or how am I to sign myself for the future? Come, tell me!" A little more tormenting on his part, a little more hesitation on her's, and then Violet whispered out her fancy name.

"It is Prince Charming."

"Thank you, Miss Violet Clayton," said Kit, laughing; "I shall try to deserve your good opinion—"

"You know my name!" cried Violet, aghast, forgetting her blushes. "You have heard of me; how do you know it? Do you really know who I am?"

"Yes, I really do."

"Then you have heard of me from the Barringtons?"

"Yes, I have."

"And yet you said you would never see me again!" said Violet, with a sigh.

"You would like to see me again?" asked Kit, turning round to her; but he received no answer. They were both silent for a couple of minutes; then he said slowly, not looking at her, but looking away out to the grey hills that were fast lightening into daylight.

"Listen to me, Miss Clayton. I am generally considered a blackguard. I believe I have behaved myself rather like one during this journey, only that the circumstances have been so exceptional that I perhaps may be forgiven. I have got myself into scrapes with you fascinating women before, but—but—there is something about you that makes me determined not to behave badly to you if I can help it. At least, if I do, it shall not be without warning you. I am quite certain that it would be far better for myself, and it might possibly be better for you, if I never saw you again. At the same time no doubt I should like, and nothing would be easier for me to do. I am going to Perthshire now, but I am not bound to stay there. I can come down to Lanfrew whenever I like. I warn you, I had better not—nothing but trouble can come of it; but there—

you shall decide! Shall I come, or sha'n't I—say yes or no?"

He turned round to her, looking down into her face with one of those rare smiles which, it was said, that no woman could ever resist from him. Nine women out of ten would not have hesitated one moment, but Violet was the tenth; all fascinated as she really was by him, she sat and twisted her hands together in dire perplexity. What on earth did he mean? she could not make out. Was he engaged to some one else, perhaps, and could not make love to her without behaving badly? What did that matter? She would not mind that if he was worth it; but was he worth it? Ah, there was the unanswerable question. Why, oh why, could she not ask him straight out, "What is your income?" That, she felt, would have solved every difficulty in a moment. But surely, surely he was a rich man; everything about him indicated wealth. Poor Violet, in her utter ignorance, thought of the dressing-bag and its gold-topped scent-bottles, of the splendid rug in which she was wrapped; she remembered the respect of the guard at Stafford, and the obsequiousness of the porters.

Surely, she thought, it is only the rich who travel in this way. Her father, who was poor, never carried about such expensive luxuries; neither did the curate, nor her uncle, nor, in fact, any of the few gentlemen whose habits and customs she had been able to observe. Gold-topped scent-bottles and other skins were, she felt, the attributes of the rich, just as drawn swords and gridirons are the attributes of mediæval saints on glass windows. For nearly five minutes Violet sat thus hesitating and debating, with her brows knitted and her hands nervously twisting themselves in and out of each other, and Kit Barrington sat and watched her. He considered himself experienced in reading women's characters, but he completely misunderstood what was passing in this woman's mind. He did not know her intense ignorance, and he could never have guessed at her intense worldly wisdom. Her face was not the faintest criterion of her character, and he naturally took her face as his guide. He saw that she was perplexed, and he thought that she had perfectly understood his warning, and was merely weighing his words carefully before she answered him: that she was in reality weighing his probable income, and, in an agony lest giving him a too favourable answer, she should find out later that he was not so rich as he appeared to be, certainly never entered into his mind at all. He was, however, a little piqued at last by her long delay, though probably, man like, he liked her none the less for it.

"You are a very long time making up your mind to such a simple answer, Miss Clayton."

Violet turned and looked at him in an agony of indecision.

It really did actually tremble on her lips to say, "Are you a rich man?"

If only she could get a satisfactory answer to that, how easy everything would become at once; but her sense told her that such a very practical question would at once scare off her game, however rich he might be.

"Well, am I to come to Lanfrew?"

"If you like," she answered, at last driven to make her decision one way or another.

"All right," answered Kit with a joyful ring in his voice. "There is the sun rising, and there comes the engine from Penrith, I do believe."

He jumped up and ran forward to join some passengers, whose circumstances, less entertaining than his own, had not made them submit with equal fortitude to the two hours' delay, and who were hurrying eagerly on to catch the first sight of the rescuing engine.

In a comparatively short space of time the line had been cleared, the carriages linked together again, and the passengers were taking their places. Kit came and fetched Violet, and they got back again into the compartment they had before. To their intense disgust, however, they were immediately followed in by two portly females in mourning, who proceeded to establish themselves comfortably in the centre places, settling a mountain of rugs and shawls at their feet, so as most effectually to divide our two fellow-travellers from each other. It was too late to change, the train was already in motion, and nothing could be done. So, with a comic glance of despair, Kit Barrington buried himself in the *Saturday Review*; whilst Violet, tired out with the many excitements of the night, fell asleep again.

When they reached Carlisle Kit had to leave her, as he was going on by another line. Before they parted, however, he carefully attended to her bodily comforts, bringing her hot coffee and rolls to the carriage; and Violet was much reassured by the sight of the handful of loose sovereigns and bank-notes, which he pulled carelessly out of his pocket when the waiter came up to be paid. Why, half of all that shining heap would pretty well have kept her and her father in luxury for a year, she said to herself. There certainly could be no doubt at all about his being a rich man. So, in all confidence, she smiled her sweetest, and flashed up her grey eyes at him with bewitching gleams, and trembled and blushed when he spoke to her, till Kit Barrington felt more and more in love with her at every minute.

But the bell rang, and he had to say "good-bye."

"Don't forget me," he whispered as he pressed her hand.

"I can never forget your kindness," she answered, looking down demurely, mindful of the old ladies in black, who were, she fancied, eyeing them rather suspiciously.

"Never mind the 'kindness,' as you call it—think of me," said Kit, quite regardless of any old ladies.

There was no time for more—only one glance at each other with which no words were needed—and Violet was carried away by herself to finish her journey in a more common-place manner than the beginning of it had been to her.

CHAPTER IV.

LANFREW.

THERE is a certain severe and solid look about a Scotch country house which is in harmony with the cold grey skies, and the grim mountain slopes that usually surround it. The square stone walls, with their many windows, the tower at one side, the ample porch built with a careful view to the

keeping out of the winds and rains which come to beat against it in bad weather, the bright green turf close up to the walls, unrelieved by the gay-coloured flower-beds which we in the south are accustomed to see round a country house, all has a certain character of its own, which is in keeping with the sterner landscapes of the north. Such a house, substantial, yet severe in aspect, was Lanfrew. Lanfrew, however, was at its best on a certain warm summer morning in August, on which I shall first introduce you to it. The sun shone down on the smooth, green lawn, shaded by two or three fine elms, and the inevitable Scotch firs, shone upon the stone terrace in front of the windows, on the heather-hued hills above it, on the blue loch that glittered like a mirror below. A pretty group stood on the gravel drive at the front door. There were two gentlemen in shooting attire, all ready for the start to their day's work: Mr. Barrington and an elderly, but very dapper little man, named Major Willet; beside them a pony laden with bags and baskets containing the lunch, while two or three keepers in the background held down with difficulty half-a-dozen dogs, who were jumping and leaping with delight around them. Three ladies were watching the start, as ladies are fond of doing, chattering and chaffing with the lords of creation, and delaying the evil moment of being left alone to themselves as long as they possibly could. Conspicuous among the three was our friend Violet Clayton. She was patting one of the dogs and chattering to her host, whose heart she had completely won in the short time she had been his guest. Violet looked even prettier than when we last saw her in the railway a fortnight ago. Her soft, delicate face had gathered fresh bloom from the mountain air and the healthy out-door life. She was all arrayed in cool, brown holland, with blue ribbons in her uncovered head, which gleamed and shone in the sunlight, while little soft rings of gold, which Nature had touched in with a delicate hand, just where her smooth hair met the low, white forehead, fluttered gently in the breeze like a coronal of little flowers. Violet's godmother, Mrs. Barrington, stood by her; a handsome, sensible-looking woman of the world, with keen, but not unkind blue eyes, and a decided-looking mouth and chin; tall, well-dressed, and slightly inclined to be portly. Mrs. Barrington looked like a woman who knew her own mind, and who had her own way in most things. The third woman of the group was Janet Maxwell. Janet was five-and-twenty; she was not pretty by the side of Violet—no one would so much as look at her, probably, but she had a grave, thoughtful look in her quiet dark eyes, and a face that was full at once of intelligence and of sweetness, which to some people was very attractive. She was Mrs. Barrington's niece, and her aunt was in a manner fond of her; but she never understood her reserved and retiring character at all. There was not an atom of sympathy between them. Mrs. Barrington could get on with Violet, whom she had known for a fortnight, fifty times better than with Janet, whom she had known all her life. But Janet was a person of importance in her family.

She was in a way something of an heiress; she had fifteen hundred a year of her own, and she was an orphan. A girl of twenty-five with that amount of fortune is not, as Mrs. Barrington

said, to be let alone. Janet's fortune was, it is true, pretty well settled; but she required an incredible amount of tutoring and lecturing to keep her up to a proper sense of what was expected of her, and Mrs. Barrington often secretly shuddered when she reflected upon what Janet might or might not possibly do if she had not some one to look after her. Miss Maxwell dressed detestably; her clothes were badly selected and badly made, and put on, as had often been assured her, as with a pitchfork. With secret scorn Violet Clayton had glanced at the well-worn serge dress, the rough felt hat, the strong but far from elegant chassure, which was all that Janet considered necessary for a life in the Highlands of Scotland, and wondered to herself that any one could, with such ample means as were at her command, be satisfied to appear in such a guise.

"If only I had her money," sighed Violet, enviously, "I would cut out every woman I came near."

As far as her dress was concerned, Janet Maxwell's money was utterly thrown away upon her. There were other things which were thrown away upon her besides, much to her aunt's surprise, as will be seen. Presently the two gentlemen wished the ladies a pleasant good-by, and started off for their day's sport.

"I can't wait any longer for the postman, Fanny, he is so late to-day," said Mr. Barrington to his wife. "I daresay there will be nothing of any importance, and of course you will answer anything that is wanted"—for the post came in late in the morning at Lanfrew.

Mrs. Barrington nodded assent, and the gentlemen moved off.

"Mind you shoot lots of birds, Major Willet, and bring me back a blackcock's tail for my hat," cried saucy Violet; for the Major, albeit furnished with the most elaborate accoutrements, was, it was well known, the very worst of shots. It was even said that, but for the shame of it, he would gladly have stopped at home day after day with the ladies.

"Violet, you are too bad!" said her god-mother laughing; "you know he shot nothing yesterday, John says."

"Indeed! you wrong the poor man. He shot a donkey, Mr. Barrington told me, by mistake."

"But he even missed that!"

"I beg your pardon, he slightly grazed its tail. He will probably finish the slaughter of it to-day. He mistook it for a red deer, I understand."

"Silly child. Ah! here comes the postman at last. Let us see whom all the letters are for—three for John, two for the Major, one for me; ah!—and one for you, Janet, and in the same handwriting, too!"

Janet took hers with a quiet smile, as if she knew very well what it was about and did not care much about it, and the two ladies opened their respective letters at the same time. Violet, who had no correspondence, stood idly watching them both leaning against the stone porch, and rubbing her little foot softly up and down upon the loose pebbles of the path. The two letters seemed to produce a most strange and different effect upon the two ladies. Janet, who had begun to read hers with the utmost tranquillity and unconcern, suddenly started, and, turning deadly pale, crushed the unfinished letter up between her hands, thrust

it hastily into her pocket, and turning quickly away disappeared into the shrubbery at the right of the house. With some surprise Violet turned round to look at Mrs. Barrington, and was still further puzzled to find that upon her face was a deep flush of annoyance and anger. She, too, without appearing to notice Janet's departure, turned away suddenly and went into the house, leaving Violet alone to put what construction she liked upon this desertion.

"They neither of them like their letters much, that's evident," she said to herself. "Well, it won't do for me to look as if I had noticed anything, so I will go for a stroll by myself to give them time to recover themselves."

She ran into the house for her hat, and then calling the little Skye terrier, who was eager to go with her, she ran through the garden, and opening a wicket gate at the end of the lawn, stood at once on the rough mountain side which sloped down towards the blue loch. When she reached its margin it looked no longer blue, but a sheet of silver rippled over into little waves by the light breeze. Violet sat down on a big stone, yellowed over with lichens, and began idly plucking at the purple heather which clustered richly around her. It was all very lovely—the rippled lake, the gay-coloured foreground, the birches on the opposite bank, with their grey-green foliage waving softly like so many noiseless ostrich plumes.

The twitter of a lark up in the blue sky, the occasional cry of a grouse, the fitful lights that played with the passing clouds upon the mountains, turning them from violet to blue, from blue to gold, and then back again to coldest grey when the sun hid for a moment behind a cloud. A very fair scene; for what can be lovelier than Scotland in fine weather? But Violet did not think much about it, she vaguely felt that it was pleasant and sunny, and better, oh, ever so much better than Sandhaven; but the poetry, the charm of it all was hidden from her, as it is to so many whose thoughts and feelings are not in concert with Nature, and from whom she jealously veils her sweetest teachings. Violet thought a good deal about her new life, about her new friends, about who was likely to come and stay at Lanfrew while she was there; she thought a good deal about her dresses, and whether she should send for some old silks of her mother's from home, and ask Mrs. Barrington's maid to furbish them up for her into something wearable; and then she thought somewhat of that travelling adventure of hers, about which, be it understood, she had never breathed a syllable to any living creature, and of the hero thereof, who had promised to come and see her, and whether he would keep his word, or whether he would forget all about her. Of all these things, Violet, sitting alone by the loch side, like some sweet guardian spirit of the scene, thought very much; but of the beauty and loveliness of the things around her, she thought not at all. My poor heroine! will any one take any interest in you at all I wonder, when I have to tell so many unpleasant untruths about you?

About half-an-hour she had sat there quite still, a pretty patch of life and colour in the quiet landscape, when she was suddenly startled by a small childish voice at her elbow.

"Are ye the lassie fra the hoose?" A small boy with rough red locks, and the raggedest of kilts,

stood holding out a letter to her, whereon the marks of his own dirty little fingers were freely impressed.

"What do you mean?" said Violet, considerably surprised. "I certainly am staying at Mr. Barrington's."

"Aweel, then this'll be for ye," replied the atom, still brandishing the note.

Violet took it, and found it duly addressed to Miss Clayton, at John Barrington's, Esq., Lanfrew House. She turned it over and over in her fingers with considerable perplexity, wondering where it could have come from.

The boy still lingered.

"Will ye na give me some siller, ye bonnie lassie?"

Violet smiled, and bestowed a sixpence on the quaint little messenger, who straightway performed a frantic selection from the Highland fling and ran away, shouting a yell of triumph over the success of his flattery.

And Violet opened her note. A sort of instinct told her where it came from. It ran thus:—

"You told me to come, and I am coming to Lanfrew. It will be better that we should meet as perfect strangers. Please believe nothing that may be told you about me. I daresay you will hear of me; but whatever they tell you is likely to be false. Have you thought of me sometimes? or am I presumptuous, and have you forgotten—'Prince Charming?'"

After reading this Violet had no more mind to sit idly by the loch-side. She got up and began to walk homewards. A strange tremor of excitement filled her heart, and set it beating loudly, while her cheeks burnt and tingled in an unusual manner. She was half-angry with herself for these unwonted signs—of course it was very exciting to think that this hero of her dreams was actually coming to Lanfrew to see her, and probably to realize all the bright visions of that wealthy marriage which had been her one thought for so many years; but, at the same time, Violet could not quite account for the keen spasm of joy which had flashed through her at the sight of the simple words, "I am coming." For, after all, it would not do to commit herself too far before she was quite certain of who or what he was; and though it was true that she acknowledged she liked the man's looks, that he was the sort of lover any girl might be proud of; still, of course, to her peculiar ideas, that could be only a secondary consideration, and her own strange and unaccountable joy, struck her as a weakness quite inconsistent with that prudence and foresight which she had laid down as the rule and guide of all her actions. As she neared the house the first thing she saw was a footman coming to meet her—

"Mrs. Barrington is asking for you, Miss; would you please go and speak to her in the morning-room."

Violet hurried forward. In the hall she met Janet, with a strange look round her dark eyes, as if she had been crying—

"Aunt Fanny wants to speak to you," she said, as Violet passed her.

"Yes, I know; I am going to her," she answered, beginning to wonder whether there could possibly be any connection between the two letters that had come by post and the note which she had just received out on the moor.

Mrs. Barrington was pacing up and down the room in a state of considerable excitement, but when Violet entered, she sank down into a chair, and called her to her.

"Ah! my dear, come here!" and then, as Violet came and knelt down beside her chair, she kissed her and stroked her hair affectionately. "Ah! what a pity it is one can't choose one's own relations. Now, if I could have had a sweet, loving, sensible girl, like you, darling, for my niece, instead of—well, I won't talk about her!"

"Why; what has Janet done?" asked Violet, who submitted to all the petting and flattery with a very good grace.

"Done! oh, it's not what she has done, but what she won't do! Look here, my darling, I have sent for you to tell you a little about her circumstances—and I have told her I should, because I think you will be able to help me. I have seen quite enough of you to understand what a clever, sensible little girl you are; and if you can influence Janet, I shall be very grateful to you. Now, both Janet and I have had letters to-day from a certain Mr. David Lennard, who announces to us both that he is coming here to-morrow. Mr. Lennard has a very fine old place in this country—about sixteen miles off, besides a nice little property in England, as well."

"He is a very rich man then?" asked Violet, who had suddenly bent her head down to play with the fringe of Mrs. Barrington's dress.

"Yes, he is very rich—and everything else that is desirable too—pleasant and gentlemanly, and not too old for her."

"Too old for whom?" said Violet, looking up in a startled way.

"Why, for Janet, of course; I am talking of her, am I not?"

"Then—then they are engaged?" said Violet, who was looking down again with a strange flush upon her face.

"Well, that is just the trouble—they are engaged in a way—it was all settled by Janet's father before he died, when she was only fifteen, so that there is an additional motive for her guidance in this matter—that of respect to her father's memory."

"And this—this Mr. Lennard, is fond of Janet?" asked the girl, in a hesitating voice.

"Of course he is!" said Mrs. Barrington. "There has never been the smallest objection on his part; he has always been quite ready and anxious to marry her, and then, of course, having her own fortune without any bother or settlements, is always a great thing for a man whose property is all in land. No, it is Janet who is the trouble; she declares that she cannot consider herself bound to him, because she was so young; that she must be allowed a free choice and time to make up her mind; and so she keeps on shilly-shallying about it in a most unreasonable manner. It is all her fault. Mr. Lennard is, I believe, most sincerely attached to her."

Here Violet slipped her hand into her pocket and felt for the little note that had come to her by the loch-side, holding it fast and repeating to herself what was written therein.

"Please believe nothing that is told you about me; whatever they tell you is likely to be false." For that David Lennard and the hero of her own

little romance were one and the same person, she did not now doubt for one moment.

"So you see, Violet," continued Mrs. Barrington, "that if you were first to try and talk to Janet a little, you might do something towards persuading her to decide in poor Mr. Lennard's favour. She might take it better from a girl of her own age than she does from me; and really, you know, she cannot state one single objection against him, not one. I defied her just now to give me any reason, however slight, against her marrying him, and she could not find a word to say. I cannot understand why she should stand out so against him—unless indeed——" and Mrs. Barrington stopped short and began to ponder.

"Unless what?" asked Violet.

"Why, unless Kit has anything to do with it," said Mrs. Barrington slowly.

"And who is Kit?"

"Why Kit is John's nephew, the son of a brother who is dead; and to my extreme annoyance, Mr. Lennard writes that he is coming on here with him, as they have been staying together in Perthshire for the last week. Violet," continued her godmother, suddenly turning to her with a smile, and lifting up her sweet young face by the chin, "Violet, I warn you that you are not to fall in love or even to flirt with Kit Barrington!"

"I don't feel so disposed at present," answered the girl laughing.

"Well, remember it is utterly forbidden to you; if you are a good girl, I shall have some plans for you by-and-by. But Kit Barrington is a *mauvais sujet*, always in some sort of trouble or other; and besides, he has not a farthing in the world, except what my husband and his cousin, Sir Henry Barrington, allow him."

"I am not at all likely to lose my heart to him," she said, smiling brightly. And she added to herself, that from the description of him, she was not much likely to be tempted to do so.

"Well, mind you don't, pretty pet, for I must say for Kit Barrington that he can be very fascinating when he chooses. So be sure you are very careful."

"Never fear, Mrs. Barrington."

And with a kiss and a caress the conference ended.

(To be continued.)

A CHIME FOR BOYS.

THE ringer's joints grow stiff, and grey hairs steal,

Like winter snowflakes, one by one, then fast,

And faster; till he needs must feel at last
That stronger hands must carry on the peal.

He thinks of struggles vain and vanished hopes,
Of discord where he meant melodious chime;
But, trusting still, he waiteth for the time
His boys, with surer hands, shall pull the ropes.

Oh, boys!—the ringers of the years to come—

Watch well the first notes of your opening peal;

Let them be sweet and clear: with voices leal

Speed forth the truth, or let the bells be dumb.

Leave the discordant tones of vice and cant;

Shun all that bears the semblance of a lie;

With steadfast aim, strong hearts, and courage high,

Stand firm amidst the jars of froth and rant.

Then greater power will come with years; and when,

Full-voiced and loud, your echoing peals shall swell,

Their clear, harmonious chime will surely tell

Of trust in God, and love for fellow-men.

ORAM BAILEY.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

VL. ON BEING IDLE.

NOW this is a subject on which I flatter myself I really am *au fait*. The gentleman who, when I was young, bathed me at wisdom's fount for nine guineas a term—no extras—used to say he never knew a boy who could do less work in more time; and I remember my poor grandmother once incidentally observing, in the course of an instruction upon the use of the prayer-book, that it was highly improbable that I should ever do much that I ought not to do, but that she felt convinced beyond a doubt that I should leave undone pretty well everything that I ought to do.

I am afraid I have somewhat belied half the dear old lady's prophecy. Heaven help me! I have done a good many things that I ought not to have done, in spite of my laziness. But I have fully confirmed the accuracy of her judgment so far as neglecting much that I ought not to have neglected is concerned. Idling always has been my strong point. I take no credit to myself in the matter, it is a gift. Few possess it. There are plenty of lazy people, and plenty of slowcoaches, but a genuine idler is a rarity. He is not a man who slouches about with his hands in his pockets. On the contrary, his most startling characteristic is that he is always intensely busy.

It is impossible to enjoy idling thoroughly unless one has plenty of work to do. There is no fun in doing nothing when you have nothing to do. Wasting time is merely an occupation then, and a most exhausting one. Idleness, like kisses, to be sweet must be stolen.

Many years ago, when I was a young man, I was taken very ill—I never could see myself that much was the matter with me, except that I had a beastly cold. But I suppose it was something very serious, for the doctor said that I ought to have come to him a month before, and that if it (whatever it was) had gone on for another week he would not have answered for the consequences. It is an extraordinary thing, but I never knew a doctor called into any case yet, but what it transpired that another day's delay would have rendered cure hopeless. Our medical guide, philosopher and friend is like the hero in a melodrama, he always comes upon the scene just, and only just, in the nick of time. It is Providence, that is what it is.

Well, as I was saying, I was very ill, and was ordered to Buxton for a month, with strict injunctions to do nothing whatever all the while that I was there. "Rest is what you require," said the doctor, "perfect rest."

It seemed a delightful prospect. "This man evidently understands my complaint," said I, and I pictured to myself a glorious time—a four weeks' *dolce far niente* with a dash of illness in it. Not too much illness, as a certain stage villain might say, but just illness enough; just sufficient to give it the flavour of suffering, and make it poetical. I should get up late, sip chocolate, and have my breakfast in slippers and a dressing-gown. I should lie out in the garden in a hammock, and read sentimental novels with a melancholy ending, until the book would fall from my listless hand, and I should recline dreamily gazing into the deep blue of the firmament, watching the fleecy clouds floating like white-sailed ships across its depths, and listening to the joyous song of the birds, and the low rustling of the trees. Or, when I became too weak to go out of doors, I should sit, propped up with pillows, at the open window of the ground floor front, and look wasted and interesting, so that all the pretty girls would sigh as they passed by.

And, twice a day, I should go down in a Bath chair to the colonnade, to drink the waters. Oh, those waters! I knew nothing about them then, and was rather taken with the idea. "Drinking the waters" sounded fashionable and Queen Anneified, and I thought I should like them. But, ugh! after the first three or four mornings! Sam Weller's description of them, as "having a taste of warm flat-irons," conveys only a faint idea of their hideous nauseousness. If anything could make a sick man get well quickly, it would be the knowledge that he must drink a glassful of them every day until he was recovered. I drank them neat for six consecutive days, and they nearly killed me; but, after then, I adopted the plan of taking a stiff glass of brandy-and-water immediately on the top of them, and found much relief thereby. I have been informed since, by various eminent medical gentlemen, that the alcohol must have entirely counteracted the effects of the chalybeate properties contained in the water. I am glad I was lucky enough to hit upon the right thing.

But "drinking the waters" was only a small portion of the torture I experienced during that memorable month, a month which was, without exception, the most miserable I have ever spent. During the best part of it, I religiously followed the doctor's mandate, and did nothing whatever, except moon about the house and garden, and go out for two hours a day in a Bath-chair. That did break the monotony to a certain extent. There is more excitement about Bath-chairing—especially if you are not used to the exhilarating exercise—than might appear to the casual observer. A sense of danger, such as a mere outsider might not understand, is ever present to the mind of the occupant. He feels convinced every minute that the whole concern is going over, a conviction which becomes especially lively whenever a ditch or a stretch of newly macadamized road comes in sight. Every vehicle that passes, he expects is going to run into him; and he never finds himself ascending or descending a hill, without immediately

beginning to speculate upon his chances, supposing—as seems extremely probable—that the weak-knee'd controller of his destiny should let go.

But even this diversion failed to enliven after a while, and the *ennui* became perfectly unbearable. I felt my mind giving way under it. It is not a strong mind, and I thought it would be unwise to tax it too far. So somewhere about the twentieth morning, I got up early, had a good breakfast, and walked straight off to Hayfield at the foot of the Kinder Scout—a pleasant, busy, little town, reached through a lovely valley, and with two sweetly pretty women in it. At least they were sweetly pretty then; one passed me on the bridge, and, I think, smiled: and the other was standing at an open door, making an unremunerative investment of kisses upon a red-faced baby. But it is years ago, and I daresay they have both grown stout and snappish since that time. Coming back, I saw an old man breaking stones, and it roused such strong longing in me to use my arms, that I offered him a drink to let me take his place. He was a kindly old man, and he humoured me. I went for those stones with the accumulated energy of three weeks, and did more work in half-an-hour than he had done all day. But it did not make him jealous.

Having taken the plunge, I went further and further into dissipation, going out for a long walk every morning, and listening to the band in the Pavilion every evening. But the days still passed slowly notwithstanding, and I was heartily glad when the last one came, and I was being whirled away from gouty, consumptive Buxton to London with its stern work and life. I looked out of the carriage as we rushed through Hendon in the evening. The lurid glare overhanging the mighty city seemed to warm my heart, and, when later on, my cab rattled out of St. Pancras' station, the old familiar roar that came swelling up around me sounded the sweetest music I had heard for many a long day.

I certainly did not enjoy that month's idling. I like idling when I ought not to be idling; not when it is the only thing I have to do. That is my pig-headed nature. The time when I like best to stand with my back to the fire, calculating how much I owe, is when my desk is heaped highest with letters that must be answered by the next post. When I like to dawdle longest over my dinner, is when I have a heavy evening's work before me. And if, for some urgent reason, I ought to be up particularly early in the morning, it is then, more than at any other time, that I love to lie an extra half-hour in bed.

Ah! how delicious it is to turn over and go to sleep again: "just for five minutes." Is there any human being, I wonder, besides the hero of a Sunday-school "tale for boys," who ever gets up willingly? There are some men to whom getting up at the proper time is an utter impossibility. If eight o'clock happens to be the time that they should turn out, then they lie till half-past. If circumstances change, and half-past eight becomes early enough for them, then it is nine before they can rise; they are like the statesman of whom it was said that he was always punctually half an hour late. They try all manner of schemes. They buy alarm clocks (artful contrivances that go off at the wrong time, and alarm the wrong people). They tell Sarah Jane

to knock at the door and call them, and Sarah Jane does knock at the door, and does call them, and they answer "awri," and then go comfortably to sleep again. I knew one man who would actually get out, and have a cold bath: and even that was of no use, for, afterwards, he would jump back into bed to warm himself.

I think myself that I could keep out of bed all right, if I once got out. It is the wrenching away of the head from the pillow that I find so hard, and no amount of over-night determination makes it easier. I say to myself, after having wasted the whole evening, "Well, I won't do any more work to night; I'll get up early to-morrow morning;" and I am thoroughly resolved to do so—then. In the morning, however, I feel less enthusiastic about the idea, and reflect that it would have been much better if I had stopped up last night. And then there is the trouble of dressing, and the more one thinks about that, the more one wants to put it off.

It is a strange thing this bed, this mimic grave, where we stretch our tired limbs, and sink away so quietly into the silence and rest. "Oh bed, oh bed, delicious bed, that heaven on earth to the weary head," as sang poor Hood, you are a kind old nurse to us fretful boys and girls. Clever and foolish, naughty and good, you take us all in your motherly lap, and hush our wayward crying. The strong man full of care—the sick man full of pain—the little maiden, sobbing for her faithless lover—like children, we lay our aching heads on your white bosom, and you gently soothe us off to by-by.

Our trouble is sore indeed, when you turn away, and will not comfort us. How long the dawn seems coming, when we cannot sleep. Oh! those hideous nights, when we toss and turn in fever and pain, when we lie, like living men among the dead, staring out into the dark hours that drift so slowly between us and the light. And oh! those still more hideous nights, when we sit by another in pain, when the low fire startles us every now and then with a falling cinder, and the tick of the clock seems a hammer, beating out the life that we are watching.

But enough of beds and bed-rooms. I have kept to them too long, even for an idle fellow. Let us come out, and have a smoke. That wastes time just as well, and does not look so bad. Tobacco has been a blessing to us idlers. What the civil service clerks before Sir Walter's time found to occupy their minds with, it is hard to imagine. I attribute the quarrelsome nature of the Middle Ages young men entirely to the want of the soothing weed. They had no work to do, and could not smoke, and the consequence was they were for ever fighting and rowing. If, by any extraordinary chance, there was no war going, then they got up a deadly family feud with the next door neighbour, and if, in spite of this, they still had a few spare moments on their hands, they occupied them with discussions as to whose sweetheart was the best looking, the arguments employed on both sides being battle-axes, clubs, &c. Questions of taste were soon decided in those days. When a twelfth century youth fell in love, he did not take three paces backwards, gaze into her eyes, and tell her she was too beautiful to live. He said he would step outside and see about it. And if, when he got out, he met a man and broke his

head—the other man's head, I mean—then that proved that his—the first fellow's girl was a pretty girl. But if the other fellow broke *his* head—not his own, you know, but the other fellow's—the other fellow to the second fellow, that is, because of course the other fellow would only be the other fellow to him, not the first fellow, who—well, if he broke his head, then *his* girl—not the other fellow's but the fellow who *was* the—Lock here, if A broke B's head, then A's girl was a pretty girl: but if B broke A's head, then A's girl wasn't a pretty girl, but B's girl was. That was their method of conducting art criticism.

Now-a-days we light a pipe, and let the girls fight it out amongst themselves.

They do it very well. They are getting to do all our work. They are doctors, and barristers, and artists. They manage theatres, and promote swindles, and edit newspapers. I am looking forward to the time when we men shall have nothing to do but lie in bed till twelve, read two novels a day, have nice little five o'clock teas all to ourselves, and tax our brains with nothing more trying than discussions upon the latest patterns in trousers, and arguments as to what Mr. Jones's coat was made of and whether it fitted him. It is a glorious prospect—for idle fellows.

FOLK-LORE.

THE present age is one in which superstition and tradition must decline before the enlightening rays of education. Possibly the boys and girls who are now growing up will be tinged with the beliefs of their fathers and mothers, particularly if they live in the country, and probably they will transmit some of their traditionary lore to their children; but it is almost certain that not many generations will pass by before the ancient superstitions disappear, or exist only to be laughed at or reasoned away, or as examples of what people believed in those dark days of ignorance, before compulsory education was heard of, and when School Boards were unknown.

Every country has its own peculiar superstitions and legends, tales of witchcraft, and supernatural agencies, and there are diversities of tradition in most of our own counties.

Some of these beliefs, which are common to most people, admit of explanation; others, again, can scarcely be traced to any reasonable source. The custom of turning to the east in religious ceremonies, for example, is probably a relic of sun-worship. It is considered unlucky to look back when leaving home—obviously on account of the disastrous consequence of this action to Lot's wife. Many people dislike, and sometimes refuse, to sit down to dinner when the number is thirteen, on the plea that one of the party will die before the year be out. This superstition has probably arisen from the fact of the number at our Lord's last supper being thirteen. Some persons condemn the numbering of the people by means of a census as irreligious, citing as proof the punishment which overtook David after performing the same act. Many such superstitions can be explained thus simply, but with some the explanation is far to seek. Why, for example, should children be warned against walking backwards, *because*, if they do so, death will deprive them of their mothers. More

likely would it be on account of the suffering caused thereby to their own poor heads. It is considered necessary in Lancashire (and probably in other counties too) to carry a child *upstairs* before it be carried *downstairs*, that is to say, the first time it leaves its mother's room, so that it may hereafter rise in the world, instead of fall. In houses where there are no stairs above the sleeping rooms the nurse will very frequently mount a chair in deference to the old tradition. Unbaptized children are, by the Lancashire peasantry, supposed when they die to go neither to heaven nor hell, but to wander about in an intermediate state, and to become either fairies or pixies. Cats are supposed to be closely connected with witches, and to be very much akin to them in their natures. They are always scared from a child's bed, for if they sleep close together, the cat will inhale the breath of the child and sap away its health and perhaps life. There is a queer old tale told in South Lancashire, which goes to show that there is in cats-land some kind of government which acknowledges a king as chief ruler. A gentleman was, one evening, sitting alone by his fireside, when he was considerably surprised by a cat, which suddenly made its appearance down the chimney. Still greater was his surprise when the cat uttered the following oracular words, "Tell Dildrum, Doldrum's dead!" and immediately disappeared. His wife entered the room shortly afterwards, accompanied by their own cat, who no sooner heard the remarkable tale, than he exclaimed, "Is Doldrum dead?" and himself rushed up the chimney. He was never heard of more, and the only solution of the story which one can possibly offer, and which is generally accepted, is that Doldrum (who was dead) was king of cat-land, and Dildrum heir to the crown.

Little did the worthy man and wife dream that they had housed a royal heir-presumptive. In connection with disease and death there are many superstitions in Lancashire, which, to this day, are firmly believed in by the peasantry, and frequently by persons who are, or consider themselves to be, educated beings. It is said that when a dead body is soft and pliable, instead of stiff, it is a sure sign that there will soon be another death in the family. Deaths or accidents, or, indeed, any remarkable occurrences, are always supposed to happen in threes. When bees forsake a hive, or crickets a hearth, it is a sure presage of death. When horses are restive at a funeral, it is another sign that death will re-visit the family. In the Roman Catholic chapel at Ashton-in-Mackerfield, is, or was, ten years ago, a "dead," or "holy hand," much treasured as a relic, and believed in for its wonderful power of cure. It belonged to a certain Father Arrowsmith, who was executed at Lancaster in 1628; his right hand was, after death, cut off by one of his friends, preserved for many years in Bryn Hall, and finally sent to Ashton. Many are the tales of marvellous cures wrought by this holy relic; it was supposed to cure tumours, which were rubbed by it, and in 1872 a paralyzed person walked many miles in order to try its efficacy, but was found on the way too exhausted to proceed. In a book of Lancashire legends, written by J. Harland, F.S.A., and T. T. Wilkinson, F.R.A.S., a very interesting story is told in connection with this dead hand. One of

the early owners of Ince Hall, an old house in Lancashire, lay on his deathbed. His lawyer had been summoned to make his will, but arrived just too late. In his dilemma the lawyer bethought himself of the dead hand which was then at Bryn Hall. He despatched his clerk in all haste to fetch it, and the story goes that the dead man, after his body had been rubbed with the holy hand, revived sufficiently to sign the will, which, however, was not his, but the lawyer's own invention. The daughter of the house, when the funeral was over, produced an unsigned will in which her father left all the property to her brother and herself, but the dishonest lawyer came forward with the will signed by the dead hand, in which the property was left entirely to him.

A quarrel was the result, and the son after wounding the lawyer, as he imagined mortally, left the country never to be heard of more. The daughter also disappeared, no one knew whither, but a skull, presumably hers, was found years afterwards in the garden. The wicked attorney is said to have been haunted by the ghost of the murdered girl, which hung suspended in air before him whithersoever he went. He ended his days in Wigan, a miserable man, the prey of remorse and despair, and the old Hall for a long time remained uninhabited.

A few words with regard to weather-lore may perhaps, be seasonable at present.

There is an old saying that

As the day lengthens,
So the cold strengthens,

presumably meaning that after the shortest day we ought to look for weather more severe than that which has preceded it.

Another tradition says that if there be frost on the shortest day we shall have a long winter. Eclipses are supposed to influence the weather, and when the Aurora Borealis appears it is said to bring rough winds and heavy rains, as well as to foretell war, if its colour be of a dark or bloody red.

At harvest time farmers are advised that—

When the donkey sounds his horn
It is quite time to house your corn.

Donkeys are considered to be very sensitive with regard to changes of weather, and when one is heard braying it is taken as a sure sign of rain. Another old superstition affirms that when an ass brays it betokens the death of an Irishman or a weaver.

Both in the North of England and in Scotland it is popularly supposed that whatever be the weather on a Friday, the Sunday following will be the same. "Sic a Friday, sic a Sunday."

Another rhyme refers to Candlemas and says—

If Candlemas-day be fair and clear,
There will be two winters in one year.

These are but very few of the many superstitions found in the North of England; all of them interesting, some of them reasonable, many of them very unreasonable. Certain it is, however, that they have had and still have some influence on those people who make it their business to be wise and considerate in such matters, though, as has before been remarked, the advancing strides of education will crush many of them underfoot.

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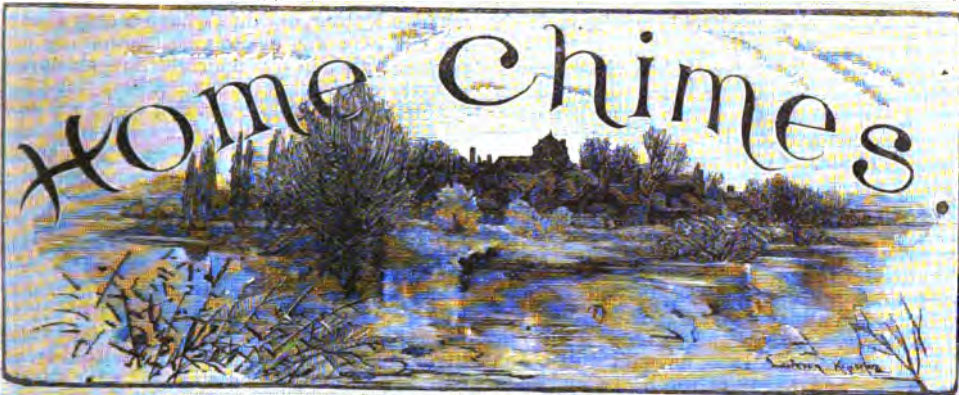
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HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT.

BY RE HENRY.

IT don't matter much now. Joyful or sorrowful, I should have to go in a very few years, for I'm turned of sixty-five, and sixty-five to a man who's had a hard life is nigh eighty to one who's bin able to take things easy. I see men older by a goodish bit nor me a-riding with their pretty daughters in the Park, or handling the ribbons up top o' one of them high coaches; and I wonder where my nerve and muscle 'ud be if I had to do the like. Ah! rheumatism and asthma don't help to make a man strong and hearty. Spite of all that's written 'bout pampering and cossetting, and such like, it's the well-fed, well-warmed bodies as makes the oldest bones. I ain't a-goin' to cry out agin them as has easy lives. We'd all have easy lives if we could, and a man's got his dooty to do just the same if he calls his wally at eleven o'clock to warm his clean shirt, as the one who turns off his hard mattress at six to go to his daily work. That's my idee. Some has to gather honey from the flowers, and some has to grub in the earth for food, and mayhap the honey's just as difficult to come by as the worms, and it wouldn't suit all stummicks. Money may be a good thing, but not all the money in the world 'ud have made my lot a easier one. If I'd bin a prince born, and Bessie Paton hadn't a-fancied me, it 'ud ha' bin all one. Well, as I ses, it don't matter much now, but, Lor', how it did matter once!

If a man had told me forty years ago that I should ever ha' felt calm and quiet about things, I should ha' thought that man a liar. But so it be. The blood won't flow at sixty-five as it do at twenty-five, and one's feelins' get all the sharp edge took off. However gradual the change may come, it's bound to come. Forty years ago! Forty year ago I was a strong, hearty young fellow, walkin' six mile every morning to the stonemason's yard, and six mile home again after

a hard day's work, and then mooning about in the lanes of a evenin' on the chance of meetin' Bessie. If I met her with some of her girl friends I was contented and happy, even though she gave me a careless nod, and a "Good-evening, Dan'l." But if I see her with a young feller, I went home sick and miserable, and thought all night 'bout going off to sea, and never comin' back to Greythorpe any more. Times she'd let me walk out with her, but that didn't make me much happier, for somehow we never could hit it off. I'd a-done most anything in the world to please her, and yet I was for ever making her angry. Then she'd ask me, in her cold way, why I d'dn't take up with some other girl, as I was always a-finding fault with her, though she knew well enough I'd ha' crawled about on all-fours for the rest of my life if she'd only said she loved me. But she couldn't say it, she ses, because she didn't mean it. She couldn't help it, if fellers thought her pretty, and told her so. She wasn't bound to marry 'em all just because they asked her.

"Don't marry 'em all, Bessie," I ses one day; "marry him who loves you best, and 'll make you a good husband."

"But they all swear they love me best," she ses, laughin'. "There's Jack Ripley—"

"He's a lad still, and don't know his own mind."

"And Matthew Blake."

"He walks out with other girls besides you."

"As for that, Mr. Dan'l Teague," ses she, "I don't know that you ought to say much 'bout other people. I saw you myself last Sunday evening on the river bank a-talkin', talkin' away to my friend Martha Stubbs."

"Because Martha Stubbs stopped me, and got jabberin' about some rubbish, and wouldn't let me move. You know Martha is a girl I despise, and I can't abide to hear you call her your friend."

"But she is my friend," she ses, tossin' her pretty head.

"Bessie," I ses earnestly, "don't call her that no more. She's a forward piece, as any man could tell,

and as you'd know yourself, only you're such an innocent creetur."

"She's a deal pleasanter spoken than some I could name," ses Bessie. And then she put down her head, and looked at me from under her long, curly eyelashes, and got a little dimple to come in her smooth cheek, till I felt nearly wild with love of the pretty teasin' little puss.

After this we were better friends for a time. She give up worryin' me a little, and she wasn't so often with Martha Stubbs, and altogether she seemed quieter like, and I was beginnin' to think mayhap she'd make up her mind and take me some day, when all my hopes was knocked on the head, so to say. A new hand was engaged at our works. He hadn't nothin' to do with cuttin' the stone, but he had to see to the books, and be in the office. He wasn't a real gentleman, but he was a pretty good imitation; very different from us rough fellows in our workin' clothes. A small-made man, but so neat and dapper-lookin' that I used to feel ashamed of my six feet of height when I stood up near him. For I knew I stooped at the shoulders, and slouched when I walked, and was altogether clumsy and ill-made. And I had sandy hair and green eyes, Bessie told me. I ain't one to care much for good looks in men, but every one got talkin' about the beauty of this new feller, Harry Jackman, till I was forced to notice him. No one could have gainsaid his bein' handsome. He had bright dark impudent lookin' eyes, and a thin, straight nose, and a soft, black moustache, which he was always strokin', and crisp, curly hair, very carefully brushed and parted, and he had a look of bein' jolly and satisfied with himself. Before a week was over there wasn't a girl in the village who didn't fancy herself in love with Jackman, and to do him justice, old or young, pretty or ugly, he always had a word and a smile for them all. But it wasn't to be expected but what he'd take more notice of Bessie than any of the others, for she was out and out the prettiest girl in Greythorpe. I was foolish enough to speak to her about him, and to warn her agin gettin' too intimate, and then she fired up and told me to mind my own business; that she could take care of herself, and didn't want no interference from me. From that day she changed towards me. She'd never bin over and above cordial, but she had pretty, teasin' ways, which made me think she didn't altogether hate me. But now I might ha' bin dirt beneath her feet for all the notice she took of me. I consoled myself, thinkin' she'd get tired of her new fancy or him of her, and then she'd find out some one loved her truer than anybody else. As to him, he was now walkin' about with Bessie, now with Martha Stubbs, and people began to talk and to wonder if he meant to marry any of the girls from the village. There was one thing I was glad of—Bessie and Martha didn't seem to be such friends as formerly; they was hardly ever together now. Folk said it was jealousy, but it seemed to me right down silly that there could be any comparison between the two. Bessie was as dainty and pretty in all her ways as if she'd bin a lady born and bred. But Martha was a big, strapping wench, with bold, black eyes, and red cheeks. She got more uppish and insolent than ever since Jackman began to notice her, but she left me alone, which was a comfort. Neither of the girls had any parents. Bessie lived with a

married brother, and didn't have a easy time of it; for the wife was a shrewish, managing sort of person, with half a dozen children—an unruly lot to every one 'cept their mother.

Martha lived in lodgin's, and went out to work all day at a milliner's in the town. Well, one day there was a talk, and a fuss, and a commotion: Martha was missin'. After she was gone it come out that she'd dropped hints about leavin' off work and goin' up to London and livin' like a lady, but nobody believed it was aught but chaff. However, here she was gone, and all her belongin's too. She'd received her week's money, paid for her lodgin's, and got a boy to carry her box to the railway, and that was just all that was known of her. If any one had gone 'long with her, or had enticed her away, they'd managed very cunnin'. I didn't wish no harm to the girl, but I was glad she were out of the way. She seemed to me quite able to take care of herself, and the village was better without her.

One summer's night Bessie was sittin' at the open window as I passed.

"Nothin' bin heard of Martha?" I ses, just for the sake of stoppin' to speak to her.

"Nothing that I knows of, Mr. Teague; but I'm sure I wish her well."

"I'm sure I don't wish her no harm," I ses, "but I'm glad she's gone."

"That sounds a hard, cruel thing to say, Mr. Teague; for my part I don't care to lose old friends."

"No; but you cares to make new ones, Bessie," I ses, "and you thinks all the world of 'em. I wish folk would stay where they belonged and not come where they're not wanted."

Bessie laughed and looked down on somethin' by her side.

"Who's not wanted, my good fellow?" said Jackman, getting up from where he'd bin layin' full length on the floor at Bessie's feet. "Greythorpe don't belong entirely to you, does it, nor this young lady either?"

"No more she don't to you," I cried angrily.

"Are you absolutely sure of that?" he asked, laughin'. "Bess, what do you say?"

She blushed and looked up at him once and then down, and turned away her head.

I didn't need to say any more. I was floored as complete as if some one had struck me a ringin' blow between the eyes. I moved away feelin' my legs not very steady. I think one o' them spoke but I did not heed. I couldn't bear the sound o' their voices then.

I went 'bout my work next day same as usual, but the dazed feelin' wouldn't leave me. I'd never bin over and above clever, but the little wit I had seemed clean knocked out o' me. There was nothin' in my head 'cept "Bessie's taken another chap," "Bessie 'll be married soon." I daresay folk noticed how stupid and mooney I was, but so long as they left me to myself I didn't care.

Soon as it were known Bessie was a goin' to carry off the prize, as Jackman was considered, everybody's tongue was on the go. The girls was a bit spiteful at first, but they were far too interested in a weddin' not to try and be on good terms with the bride. It was the mothers who was disappointed for their daughters as cackled loudest.

"'Twas a pity she should ha' looked above her,

she'd ha' bin far happier in her own spere of life."

"A sad thing she's got no mother, there's things a mother 'ud a seen to afore ever it had bin allowed to go so far.

"If Mrs. Hodges, where Mr. Jackman lives, is to be credited, many and many's the night he's come home the worse for drink till she was frightened out of her very life lest he should set the place a-fire."

Here was somethin' for me to do at last. I must get at the truth of these gossips' tales. Bessie's brother was that proud of his sister makin' such a good match, he wouldn't do anything to hinder it; and the wife was glad enough to get rid of the girl's pretty face 'gainst the time her own ill-favoured brood should grow up. So I must needs be her guardian angel, and if I saved her from an unhappy marriage how pleased an' grateful she'd be, and how she'd say—Ugh! what a blarmed, drivelling old idiot I must ha' bin not to ha' known better.

I went to Mrs. Hodges and come straight to the pint, askin' if it were true she'd said Mr. Jackman often come home dead drunk. She hum'd and ha'd and snivelled with her apron to her eyes, and says she—

"I'm a lone widder as makes my bread with the sweat of my brow, and far be it from me to seem unhandsome to a gent as has always paid reg'lar and no fault-fundin', and it do seem hard that what comes out of a friendly cup o' tea or jug of ale should be brought up agin a body, and p'raps taken a unfair advantage of."

"Well, Mrs. Hodges," I ses, "no one wants to take a unfair advantage; indeed, if so be as this marriage were broken off you might keep your lodger till doomsday."

I thought myself very smart for thinkin' o' this. Well, I got from her that she did think Mr. Jackman was a bit too fond of crookin' his elber, and there had bin a young woman a-comin' after him now and again which was what she didn't approve, though who the young woman might be she couldn't say, on account of her bein' that muffled up.

This was enough for me. Off I went straight to Bessie, red-hot with my news, thinkin', I suppose, poor fool that I was, that she'd up and say—

"I'm that obliged to you, Dan'l Teague, for the trouble you've bin at, and I see now that Harry Jackman ain't at all the persen for a young woman to set her heart upon, and you're worth a dozen such as him."

Well, if this is what I expected it ain't what I got. Bessie flamed out at me in a manner I shouldn't ha' believed possible. She said I was a mean, skulking cur to go a-routin' out lies about them as was far better nor me; and a man who'd do a trick like that 'ud do anything; and it was all along of her not bein' able to like me, but was that any reason for revengin' myself upon one who'd never injured me. And presently she fell a cryin', and all I could do was slink away, feelin' much as I did once when I were a boy and robbed a thrush's nest and saw the mother bird come back a lookin' for her little uns. So arter all there was nothin' for me but to grin and bear it. And I had to bear it while them two courted and then got married and settled down in a pretty little house

outside the town. I thought then I'd finished with them. I saw Jackman sometimes at the works, but we didn't often come across one another, and of Bessie I never heard, 'cept when there was a little girl baby born. Somehow this seemed to bring up all the old trouble again. I got thinkin' 'bout the child, and all I'd ha' done and said if it had bin mine, and how pretty Bessie must look with the little thing in her arms, till I found myself gettin' quite silly 'bout it. I didn't notice much change in Jackman, tho' it seemed to me to be Bessie's husband and the father of her child, might almost ha' given a man the look of a angel. But he jogged along, laughin' and jokin' just in his old fashion. They lived in a humble sort of way, considerin' he got a good salary. Some said it was 'cause he had married beneath him. Some said he had other ways of spendin' money besides on his wife. He wasn't quite so much at the public as formerly, still there's no doubt he took at times more'n his head could well stand.

One bitter afternoon I well remember one of my mates whisperin' to me, "The gov'nor 'll go home well primed to-night, he's bin a takin' somethin' already to keep out the cold."

Mayhap I'd heard the same remark often before, but to-day it made an impression on me, and for a reason. He generally left earlier than us workmen, but to-day he seemed in a fidget to be off, and went a good half hour before his usual time. My nearest way home lay along the banks of the river. It was a bleak, dreary walk, but that didn't matter much to me. There was no companionship I cared about, and dull, dreary places seemed to suit me. To-night I remember thinkin' it all looked more desolate than ever. There was a light snow fallin', and nothin' but a few bare trees this side the river. On the other, there was some cottages here and there, but they were closely shut up to keep out the bitter wind, and not a child nor even a dog to be seen playin' about. I was thinkin' how black the river looked by contrast with the snow, and how cold it must be, when suddenly, turnin' a bend in the path, I come upon a group of people. Some had torches or lanterns in their hands, and they was lookin' down at somethin' at their feet and talking all altogether.

"What is it?" I asked, pushin' my way through the crowd.

No need to ask again, no need for any one to answer. It's a sight one don't easy forget—the limp, drippin' body of a man drown'd. But what startled and sickened me was, not the comin' unexpected on a corpse, it was to recognize a man I'd known, and seen warm and healthy not two hours gone—Harry Jackman.

One o' Bill Smithers' boys had bin passin' a little while before, and had seen a body floatin' on the water with the head jammed up alongside the bank. He'd raised the alarm, and a lot of fellers had come and dragged the body out, and there it were.

"And now all we can do is to carry it home," ses one.

"Won't some o' the women go first and tell his poor wife?" I ses, for there was women among the crowd. They started off willin' enough. Some folk likes to have bad news to tell, let 'em be ever so tender-hearted.

I didn't lend a hand to bearin' the corpse, but I went for a doctor, and to tell at the police

station what had happened. You may be sure there was a commotion through the village and the neighbourin' town for days arter this. Some talked of murder, some talked of suicide, but the crowner's verdict was death through misadventure. Of course it come out that he'd taken a drop that day and mightn't ha' bin over steady on his legs, and the night was perticklerly dark. There were a ngly blow on the temple, but that might ha' bin through strikin' hisself in fallin', or it might ha' bin done when the head got jammed up agin the river bank.

I only saw Bessie once and that were at the inkwich; and her all in deep black with her baby in her arms I thought were the pitifullest sight I'd ever beheld. I wanted bac' to speak to her and tell her how I felt for her trouble, but she turned away and wouldn't so much as look at me. I thought then it was only her grief, but afterwards it struck me she weren't the only one as turned the cold shoulder to me. It may ha' bin my fancy but there was the feelin' and I couldn't get rid of it. It 'ud bin better for me if I'd bin arrested on suspicion of murdering Jackman for my innocence could ha' bin proved easy. My mates knew what time I left the works, and Jackman had been dead an hour and more before I went near the spot. At last I got that thin-skin'd about it all that I made up my mind to leave the place altogether. I was always a longin' to see Bessie and always a fearin' to in case I should see in her eyes the suspicion that was for ever a tormertin' me. So I give notice to the manager and packed up my few goods, and started for London.

I soon got work to do, for I was clever at my trade, and bimeby I found myself a hoardin' up money just as if I'd got an object to live for same as I had two years ago. I was pretty solitary, you may suppose, for I didn't know a soul in London and I wasn't one to chum up with strangers. As to women I thought no more o' them than I did of the stones in the street. There was girls lodgin' in the same house with me. There was girls a passing by every minute in the day. It seemed to me the world was full of girls, but there was only one Bessie.

I lived like this nigh upon four year, when a curious thing happened. I was coming homelate one Saturday night, for I'd bin out buying some things I wanted 'gainst Sunday's dinner. It wasn't a aristocratic quarter I was in. The narrower road was lined with coster's barrers; and the strong smellin' oil lamps was a flarin' away showin' off the vegetables and fish and tinware, and people was bawlin' at the top of their voices. From a public house at the corner come a noise o' singin' and shoutin'. I was standin' by a purchasin' some onions and 'taters to eat with a heart I had in my hand, when down the steps o' the public came reelin' a woman and lurches right up agin me.

"Take care," I ses, "or you'll upset the apple cart. Here, stand up straight, can't yer?"

"No, nor more couldn't you," she hiccuped, "if you was as empty inside as I am. Give us a tater, my fine feller, just for old friendship's sake."

She was a tryin' of it on I knew, but I was sorry to see a woman in such a condition, so I put some o' my purchases into her hands. She looked at me astonished; then all on a sudden her face changed,

and "Oh! my God, if it ain't Dan'l Teague," she says; and in a minute she was as sober as if she'd never seen the inside of a public in her life.

"Yes, it's Dan'l Teague sure enough," I made answer. "And who may you be?"

"Don't you know me?" she says. "I was chaffin' a minute ago, but sure enough we were friends once. Don't you remember Martha Stubbs?"

It was a shock to me to see her I'd knowed as a handsome, strappin' wench, turned into this bold-faced, unwholesome-looking woman.

"I'm sorry for you, Martha," I ses; "I didn't expect ever to ha' seen you like this. Let me take you home."

"Home!" She laughed out loud. "Oh! you'd be pleased to see my home, it's that neat and clean and pretty, and such pleasant people about. Home! I've never knowed what home meant."

"You knew what decency and respectability meant, Martha. What would all the folk down at Greythorpe say to see you now?"

"Hush," she ses, and there was a look of terror in her eyes; "don't talk to me of Greythorpe; don't tell me about any of the people there. I don't want to know; I won't know."

She made as though she would run off, but I stopped her.

"There, I ain't a goin' to talk 'bout nothin' you don't care to hear; but let me know where you live. It strikes me if you go on as you're a goin now, you'll want a friend before long."

"No," she ses, "I don't choose no one to come pryin' after me." And she wouldn't say, not all I could do to make her. But I told her where my lodgin's was. "And Martha," ses I, "there'll always be a corner by the fire, and a bit o' food for you there."

She looked at me curious, nodded her head quickly, and went away.

Weeks and weeks passed, and I heard nothin' of Martha. Sometimes I used to fancy I saw her in the streets, but there was so many women in London like her—heaven help 'em—bold-eyed, flauntin', bedraggled, that it was hard to recognize one. We had a bitter winter, and I often pictured her as wantin' food and fire.

One night in March, when a keen north wind was blowing that cut through you like a knife, I come into my little room after work hours, and saw a woman crouchin' down by the fire.

"Martha," I ses.

She got up, and shocked as I'd bin at the change in her last time I see her, there was even a greater change now. Then it was the drink and the bad life she were leadin' as had laid their mark upon her. Now there was Death in her face, plain as if the letters had bin writ there.

"I didn't think ever to come nigh you," she ses, "but I'm forced to it. The drink's bin killin' me all these years, and now the want of it's killin' me. I haven't a farthin' to buy it with. Give me some, for the Lord's sake."

"I'll give you a wholesome meal for the Lord's sake, and for your own sake too, Martha," I ses, "but not a drop o' that pison shall you get from me. Here, let's put the kettle on and you cut the bread, and make a bit o' hot toast. A woman does these things handier nor a man. And what do you say to a slice o' fat bacon and a egg?"

I bustled about and soon got the meal ready,

and set a chair for Martha at the table. She didn't make much way with the food, but she drank cup after cup of tea eagerly.

"Tain't bad stuff," she ses. "I mind the time when I hadn't tasted nothin' stronger than that."

"And I hope the time'll come agen, Martha. You'll be a changed woman yet."

"Yes, I shall be a changed woman once, and that'll be when I'm set out for my berryin'. Not that it'll be much change. I often think I look like a corpse. 'Tain't no use denyin' of it, Death has got hold o' me and I can't shake him off."

"Then if you really think so, my poor girl ain't this all the more reason why you should lead a different life?"

"It's too late, Dan'l, for anythink. I'm past work this long time, and I don't know how to thrive."

"And wouldn't do it if you could, Martha. Come, don't make yourself out so bad."

"Bad, I didn't make myself bad. One made me bad as ought to ha' known better. As to thievin' I've done worse nor that. Where's Harry Jackman?" she asked abruptly.

"Dead these four years—found drowned in the river one winter night."

She covered her face and moaned, rocking to and fro.

"What was Harry Jackman to you?" I asked.

"He was the man as ought to ha' bin my husband—the man as promised me, and made me leave my decent lodgins' and my honest work. He packed me full with lies and fair speeches, and made me what I am."

"Oh, Martha, is this true?" I asked, thinkin', Heaven forgive me, not o' the wretched creature before my eyes, but of Bessie, who had loved and trusted such a blackguard.

"It's as true as that I'm a-sittin' here. Didn't no one ever suspect it?"

"Never that I know on."

"And didn't no one ever suspect how he come by his death?"

"He'd bin drinkin' heavily, and it's my belief he missed his footin' and fell."

"Is that what every one believed?"

"No," I ses, bitterly. "It was known how I'd cared for Bessie, and hoped to make her my wife, and it was known I didn't love Jackman; and it's my opinion that some as ought to ha' known better, suspected me o' murderin' him."

"You!" says Martha, startin' to her feet; "you that wouldn't harm a fly—you that was allus only too good to folk as didn't deserve it! Is that why you left your native place? Well, you just go right back agen, and tell 'em they're a set o' dolts and asses and dunderheads; tell 'em it were me as murdered Harry Jackman, and serve him right, too!"

"Hush, hush, Martha! Some one 'll hear you."

"Let 'em hear me," she ses; "it's God's truth I'm speakin'—let 'em hear me. What do I care? If they puts me in quod, I shall be warmer and better fed than I've bin these months past. If they want to take my life, it's only what I know is comin' to me any way. And what, with their blunderin' and dawdlin', maybe I'd cheat the hangman after all. I'm glad I know the worst. Sometimes I've had a horror that I should meet

him, and that I shouldn't know if it was him or his ghost. I never knew for certain if he was alive or dead that night I left him in the river."

"But, my poor girl," I ses, thinkin' maybe these was fancies brought on by drink, "you must be a-deludin' yourself. You weren't in Greythorpe that time. It was two years after you went away."

"D'y'e think I don't know?" she says; "d'y'e think I don't remember everythink as happened? It was the summer after Harry Jackman come that he sent me up to London with fair words and promises, and said as how he was a-comin' up to marry me in a few weeks. Well, I thought it were only natural he shouldn't care to marry me down in Greythorpe, seein' I wasn't his equal in any way. He said he'd give up the works soon, and find something to do in London, so that at first I was contented enough. He used to come and spend Sunday, and maybe half o' Saturday with me, and he give me plenty o' money. But bimeby all this changed; it got to be two, three, and four weeks that he didn't come, and times was bad. I must look out for something to keep myself, and not a word about makin' me his wife. Well, I wrote and wrote, and he put me off, and things went on like this till at last there come a time when he didn't so much as answer my letters, and I grew half mad. Then I wrote to say I should be in Greythorpe next day, and a-waitin' for him by the river when he left work, and if he didn't come, I'd go straight to the manager, and tell him everything. He come sure enough."

"I expect it was the scare your letter give him as set him drinkin' so hard all that day."

"Yes, I see he were a bit muddled when he met me. But the drink had given him Dutch courage, and he blustered and swore away at me, but I didn't care. Then he told me he was a respectable married man with a wife and baby, and if I dared keep on a worritin' him he'd give me to the police. You may be sure I were a bit staggered, for I hadn't thought of him marryin' anyone else, I could ha' screamed and cried, but I wouldn't let him see the trouble I were in. I called him some hard names, and I give him a bit o' my mind, but he only laughed and told me to be a sensible girl, and go back to London and do the best I could for myself. I asked what I was to do, how I was to live, and then he laughed agen and said something as sent me just mad. I sprang at his throat so sudden he reeled backwards. Then I caught up a clod of earth or a stone maybe and aimed it at his head. He tottered and put up his hands as if he were blinded or stunned, and then I heard a splash."

She covered her face again and began rockin'.

"Why didn't you run for help," I asked.

"I didn't want to help him. I was glad to have him a lyin' there, I was mortal afraid some one would come and find me. Not because I thought about bein' punished for what I done, but I didn't want no one who'd known me to see what I'd come to. So I ran as fast as I could back to the railway station, and the night was dark and lonely, and I didn't meet nobody, and I got back here and never knew nothink more 'bout him, cept when I've dreamt of him. I found a drop o' drink was the thing as made me forget best and I kep' on

drink, drink, till I come to be what you sees me. So now you knows all about it, "she ses with her hard reckless laugh, "and you can hand me over to the bobbies soon as ever you like. And down you goes to Greythorpe and clear yourself if any's bin such fools as to suspect you."

I don't know whether Martha really thought I should split on her; poor thing, she hadn't much cause to think well of men. But even if it were no question o' doin' her harm, there were another reason why I wouldn't never ha' let the facts be known. I couldn't bear that Bessie should learn the truth 'bout her husband. It were hard enough to ha' lost him, but to tell her that she never ought to ha' trusted and believed in him, that he'd bin a deceivin' of and lyin' to her all through, seemed a cruel thing. And when Martha died, not many months arter that night, things looked no way different to me. It's true I got thinkin' o' Bessie and the old place till I couldn't rightly bear it. So afore the summer were over I asked for a holiday, knowin' I'd earned it through four years' hard work without more'n a day's rest at a time. I got a week's leave and I started for Greythorpe, and folk was that hearty and glad to see me I couldn't ha' believed possible. They told me all the gossip of the place, how this one had died and that one got married, and Bessie's name cropped up among others, and I found out she were Bessie Jackman still. Then some one pointed out her child a trottin' about on the common playin' ball, and I went and made friends with her. I bought the little thing sweeties and we had a game o' romps together. Bessie's house overlooked the common in one part, and I thought she can easy enough come out and speak to me if, so be, she feels inclined. I wouldn't thrust myself upon her, rememberin' how she'd never bin friendly towards me since the day I warned her agin Jackman. But now I did hope that now she'd say "let bygones be bygones," and then it wouldn't cost me much thinking to throw up my situation in London and settle down in Greythorpe once more.

The child enjoyed her game of play as much as I did, and ses she "Will you come again to-morrer, Mr. Dan'l," and you may be pretty sure I did come to-morrer, and the next day, and the next, and always with sweeties and toys in my pocket. But the fourth day the little maid weren't there. The day was fine and warm, and I waited and waited but she never come. Later on I saw her a standin' at their garden gate, her dollie in her arms, and I made bold to go up and speak to her.

"You didn't come for the sweeties this mornin'," I ses. "How was that?"

She put up her little lip as if she were a goin' to cry, and ses she—

"You're to go away and I'm never to speak to you any more. Mammy says you're a wicked man and killed my daddy."

I stood still and stared at the child. Everything seemed reelin' about. Then she come a step nearer, and ses she—

"Still if you've got the sweeties in your pocket I dessey I might take 'em just this once. Mammy don't like that things should be wasted."

But before I could answer a voice called sharply from one o' the upper windows and the little thing ran into the house.

That's the end o' my story. That was just the end o' my life, though I've lived nigh thirty-five

years since then. It was my death-blow to know she could harbour such a cruel, unjust thought o' me who'd ha' died to please her. If she'd thought or spoke it in the heat o' passion, when her grief were just fresh, I could ha' excused it. But after four year, deliberate like, and to teach such a thing to the innocent little child as had come to like me! I'd done my best to spare her and this were my reward. I couldn't ha' told her the truth then, it would ha' seemed like revengin' myself to go and speak ill o' the dead, besides nothing could ha' made any difference now. She'd ha' hated me worse nor ever, same as she did when I spoke to her years ago. But, as I ses before, it don't matter much now. It's a long time since. And, mayhap, if I'd bin happy with wife and children it 'ud seemed hard to leave 'em when my time come. No, arter all, it don't matter much.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever," "Juliet's Guardian,"
"Pure Gold," "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER V.

FRESH ARRIVALS.

IT is no exaggeration to say that Violet Clayton lay awake nearly the whole of the night.

She had hardly been able to sit through dinner with patience, and was utterly unable to keep up the pleasant little chit-chat which her host usually found so charming in her. Soon after dinner she had pleaded a headache, of which her unnaturally flushed cheeks seemed to give a sufficient indication, and had retired to her own bedroom. Once alone, she locked her door, and gave herself up to the most delightful anticipations, and to the further contemplation of her precious note.

Everything now seemed perfectly clear to her. Her "Prince Charming's" hints about the troubles which might ensue from his coming to Lanfrew alluded of course to this sort of semi-engagement to Janet which clogged his freedom. It was plain to Violet that he, at all events, did not care for her, and from what Mrs. Barrington had told her it would seem that Janet did not care for him. They were being urged on into a marriage which was distasteful to them both. What could be more sad!

Violet felt that upon her had fallen the almost divine mission of stepping in between these two persecuted souls, and delivering them from a lifetime of misery by carrying off the lover herself. Her heart swelled with a generous emotion as she thought of it. There seemed to her to be nothing mean, or sordid, or selfish about it. Like Joan of Arc, she felt that she had been given a mission, a purpose in life. To carry off Janet's lover had become a high and sacred duty, "and," added Violet, piously to herself, "in this instance, fortunately, both my duty and my inclination point the same way." There was always, of course, that little discovery about the landed property and the wealth, but by this time she almost looked upon that as a sort of after-blessing, bestowed upon her

as a reward for her high-minded conduct. It ended in her falling asleep with David Lennard's name upon her lips.

Anything more fearfully ill than Janet Maxwell looked the following day it would be difficult to imagine. It was impossible to help noticing her as she took her place at the breakfast-table.

"Have some bacon, Janet, or some fish, or an egg?" asked Mr. Barrington cheerily.

"Nothing, thank you; I am not hungry," answered Janet in a low voice.

Her aunt looked up angrily.

"What nonsensical affectation, Janet! You must eat something; I insist upon it. I have no notion of young ladies starving themselves from sentiment!"

Janet winced, but judged it best to hold out her plate in silence.

"You must eat a little colour into your cheeks before the afternoon, or what will somebody say to us?" said Mr. Barrington with a smile, as he helped her plentifully.

"Ha! ha! to be sure. You young ladies ought to eat plenty to keep up your strength for bringing down your game, eh, Miss Clayton?" laughed little Major Willet.

"Is that the reason you are keeping all the buttered toast to yourself, Major Willet? Because I should like some. If you eat it, all we shall expect you to kill twice as many birds as you did yesterday."

"Ah! so I shall. It's a nice still day, to-day. I shall shoot much better. I hadn't quite got my eyes in yesterday, you know," said the little man gravely, having evidently quite blotted out of his memory the one rabbit which had fallen to his gun the day before. "It takes a day or two to get your eye in, doesn't it, Barrington?"

"Certainly; certainly, Major. You'll get back to your old form soon," replied his host, seriously, for it was always the fashion at Lanfrew to encourage the Major's little self-delusions about his shooting, until naughty Violet, in the arrogance of her young beauty had come to laugh at him to his face.

"Well, Miss Clayton, you will be up to all sorts of fun, I suppose, now there are two young fellows coming?" continued the Major, who loved his little jokes with the pretty Violet. "Two handsome young fellows; they will be both at your feet—broken hearts, and all that sort of thing—eh?"

With a sudden impulse both Mrs. Barrington and Janet looked at the girl as she sat smiling and lovely opposite them in all the queenliness of her beauty, and it struck them both for one moment that it was perhaps a dangerous experiment to have brought such an attraction as Violet in the way of the two men whom they would of all the world least wish her to captivate. Were little Major Willet's chance words, spoken in purest jest, likely indeed to be realized in earnest? But Mrs. Barrington thought she knew Violet to be the gentlest and most docile of her sex, and felt she could be sure of her. It was as well, however, to crush such ideas at once.

"I don't think you can understand, Major Willet, that Mr. Lennard is engaged to my niece."

"Aunt Fanny!" cried Janet, much distressed, "You should not say so."

"Well, my dear, as good as engaged, I ought to

have said, perhaps. We have no secrets from an old friend like you, Major."

But Janet rose from the table, and hastily left the room.

"I am sure I beg your pardon, Miss Maxwell," cried the Major, flying to open the door for her; but Janet was already beyond hearing.

"You are too hard on that girl, Fanny," said Mr. Barrington.

"She provokes me beyond measure," answered his wife. And then Violet, too, rose and left the room, Mrs. Barrington smiling and nodding to her as she went, feeling firmly convinced that the darling girl was gone to put in that word in season with which she had asked her to further and assist her plans. Violet had indeed gone to look for Janet, but not with the intention which her godmother suspected. She found her in the billiard-room leaning against the window, and staring out at the mountains in a despairing sort of way.

"My dear Janet!" Janet started, and looked round. "Won't you talk to me a little? you know your aunt has told me all about you."

"Yes, I suppose she has," said Janet, wearily.

"Yes, and I feel for you so much. I quite sympathize with you. I think you have been so hardly treated!" added Violet, waxing bolder. Janet turned and looked at her with a sort of anger in her eyes.

"You think I have been hardly treated," she repeated slowly. "What can you mean?"

"I mean—I mean," hesitated Violet, who was somewhat taken aback. "I mean that your aunt seems to have forced you on into this engagement, and I can see you don't care about it, and—and—" Janet smiled.

"Thank you, dear, you are very kind, but of course you don't understand. I thought for one instant that you did, though, of course, how could you? You need not be uneasy about me. I am upset now—by—by something I have heard, but I shall be quite myself again by the afternoon. My aunt is unkind to speak of my relations with David Lennard to everybody, to you, and to Major Willet, as she did just now, and, of course, it annoys me; but she is quite right. This engagement is quite the best thing in the world for me, and I shall probably settle things definitely during this visit, for I certainly have been too long in making up my mind," added Janet, with a little smile.

"But, Janet," cried Violet eagerly, "for goodness sake don't agree to marry a man you don't care for. Think what misery you would be laying up for yourself; think of being tied for life to a man you couldn't bear; think how wrong, how wretched!" and here she stopped, fairly out of breath with her own eloquence, and also because she suddenly remembered to turn round and see that the door was well shut, lest her godmother might by any mischance overhear the conscientious way in which she was fulfilling her injunctions.

"My dear child," said Janet laughing, "pray spare me from this torrent of virtuous indignation. Whoever could have told you that I could not bear David Lennard?"

"Why I thought you did not like him. I understood——" stammered Violet, beginning to feel that her fine scheme of deliverance and interposition was rather slipping away from her.

"You understood wrongly, Violet," said Janet gravely. "David Lennard is the truest, the best, the kindest of men; I admire him above all the world, and I am quite convinced that he will make the very best husband that any woman was ever blest with. All the same, thank you for your kind intentions; you are as warm-hearted as you are beautiful!" added Janet, kissing her affectionately. For you see no one could resist Violet, her face was so exquisitely fascinating; and people gave her credit for so many more good qualities than she really possessed. But Violet was not pleased with the result of this conversation; she had, she felt, been rather done out of her romance. However, she consoled herself by reflecting that, if the lady was not anxious to be released, the gentleman most assuredly was so; and that to deliver a distressed and wealthy young gentleman from an engagement which was odious to him, was, possibly, as fine a deed of charity as to rescue a despairing maiden.

In the afternoon, Violet, in an uncontrollable fit of shyness, fled into the summer-house at the end of the shrubbery, whence she plainly heard the wheels of the returning dog-cart, which had been sent to the station to meet the two gentlemen. At the end of a quarter of an hour she was debating in her mind the advisability of going into the house, when she suddenly saw Mrs. Barrington and Janet, with the two new arrivals, walking down the lawn towards her. At a glance she recognized her fellow-traveller, walking, as of course he would be in duty bound to do, she thought, by the side of Janet. With a throbbing heart and flushed cheeks, which she could in no way control, she came out of her retreat and went forwards to meet them.

"Ah! here you are, child!" cried Mrs. Barrington; "we were coming to find you. Mr. Lennard, this is my god-daughter, Miss Clayton, the child of one of my dearest friends; and," she added immediately, in a cold and formal manner, slightly turning to the other gentleman, "Miss Clayton—Mr. Christopher Barrington;" and then the truth was revealed to her!

David Lennard, who was shaking hands with her, was a tall, stalwart young man, with fair hair and moustache, blue eyes, and a ruddy complexion, whom she had never seen before; whilst the Prince Charming of her travelling adventure was nothing but the penniless *mauvais sujet*—Kit Barrington.

Poor Violet! Let us not take a pleasure in dwelling on the horror—the dismay—the almost despair which swept over her in a perfect hurricane in that bitter moment! Truth to say, she concealed her feelings very cleverly indeed; she only turned a little pale, and no one noticed particularly. Mrs. Barrington told her she looked cold, and that she had better run in and get a warm shawl if she wanted to stay out, as the wind was rather chilly; and Violet turned away and went indoors, without a word.

"What a shame, what a shame! How disgracefully I have been treated; how vilely he has behaved!" and she flung herself on her bed in a paroxysm of angry tears. It was mostly anger, certainly, but there was a good deal of keen disappointment too; for if only Kit Barrington had been Janet's rich lover, how very happy she would have been!

"It is all over with him, of course," she said to herself, when she had recovered herself a little; "but I am not going to sit quiet and do nothing. I must do something else now—let me see!" and she sat still and thought and planned till the dressing-bell rang.

When Violet issued from her room at eight o'clock, all arrayed in blue gauze, and with white roses in her hair, with every trace of emotion carefully washed away from her fair face—she came forth armed to the teeth, as it were, with a completely new set of plans and projects.

Fortune favoured her. As she crossed the hall some one came out of the billiard-room door; it was Kit Barrington. She went boldly up to him.

"I wanted to speak a few words to you, Mr. Barrington."

"Come in here," said Kit, going back into the billiard-room.

She went in, he followed her, and shut the door. She went and stood by the mantel-piece; there was a bright fire glowing on the hearth—there always are fires in a Scotch house in the evening, even in August; in that, I think, consists one of its chief charms. Kit came up to her with such a light of mischievous tenderness in his eyes that Violet, brave as she was, felt her courage falter. She controlled herself, however, with a strong effort, and her voice was quite cool and steady as she spoke.

"I think, Mr. Barrington, that you are entirely under a misapprehension about me," she said in the coldest voice.

"What do you mean?" he said, stepping back from her, and looking at her with considerable surprise.

"I mean that I have considered this note"—and she drew it out of her pocket—"which I believe you sent me—a piece of impertinence? I therefore return it to you."

"Violet!" he exclaimed in deepest indignation.

"My name is Miss Clayton," said Violet, with dignity.

"I beg your pardon!" he answered, with a slight bow and a scornful smile.

"You have taken a mean advantage of the—of the—unfortunate circumstances"—she was slightly at a loss for the correct adjective—"under which we met before, to treat me with a want of proper respect. There was not anything that took place to warrant—"

"Not anything?" repeated Kit, coming a step nearer to her. He understood the ways of women too well to lose his temper with her. He stood close to her and slightly bent towards her as he repeated, almost in a whisper—"Was there nothing? Are you quite sure? Have you not forgotten?" And, in a weak moment, Violet lifted her eyes and looked at him. In that moment, all the artifice and the worldliness in her died away, and the woman alone stood before him. She coloured up to the roots of her hair and stood before him trembling from head to foot.

The remembrance of the grey summer night and its incidents came vividly back before her eyes, and with it a sense of unutterable shame and despair. Violet knew now, with her fortnight's knowledge of the ways and manners of the world in which she had come to live, that she should never have allowed herself to be so taken care of by a man who was a perfect stranger to her. She

had put herself fatally, miserably into his power; and the sting of it all was that he was not the kind of man which, in her ignorance, she had imagined him to be. If he had been rich, she would, of course, have married him, and no harm would be done. But he was poor; therefore she could not marry him, even if he wished it, which was doubtful—and yet she had given him a hold over her for ever! Thinking of these things, she nearly cried with anger and impatience.

"Here, take this horrid note!" she said, petulantly, turning away from him, and utterly forgetting to be dignified.

"That is easily disposed of!" said Kit, with a laugh; he took it from her hand and tossed it carelessly into the fire. And yet she could not help a feeling almost of sorrow as she watched the little crumpled piece of paper, which she had kissed so rapturously and slept with under her pillow, now fast shrivelling away into ashes among the flames. Kit Barrington looked at her with a half smile. If he was not so confident as at the beginning of the interview, he still looked by no means like a desponding lover.

"I see what it is," Miss Clayton, he said, lightly, "my affectionate and devoted aunt has been giving you a little sketch of my character; I hoped you would not have believed her, but I see that she has succeeded in doing me some mischief; however, I am not at all hopeless of reinstating myself in your good opinion. We will, therefore, as you seem to wish it, forget the past and begin afresh as perfect strangers. Do you agree?"

"Certainly I agree," she answered in a low voice. At this moment the dinner gong sounded, and they instantly separated without another word.

(To be continued.)

THREE MEETINGS.

BY EVELYN EVERETT GREEN.

L

"I SUPPOSE I am trespassing," said Frank Rivers, pausing a moment before plunging recklessly into a lovely glade, carpeted with soft green turf and banks of primroses and wild hyacinths. "But I can't help it. And if the owner is, as I believe, father to poor Tremaine whom I knew in Italy, he will not grudge me one ramble over his beautiful park, before I go back to my old labours in London hospitals. Heigh-ho!"

Beautiful indeed it was. Tall trees rose round him on every side, clad in all the graceful loveliness of late spring. The brilliant sunshine, whose brightness and warmth seemed to tell of coming summer, was softened here to a tender flickering green radiance, through which many a dazzling beam darted its shifting glory, and lay like a spot of liquid gold upon the dark tree trunks, the soft carpet of turf and moss, or the still brighter green of the young leaves overhead.

It did not need an artist's eye to detect the

wondrous beauty of the scene; yet Frank was artist enough to take a keener pleasure in Nature's loveliness than is vouchsafed to most men of his years.

Suddenly he stopped short with a start. What was it he had seen? A young girl, reclining in a sort of natural lounging-chair formed by the roots of an old tree, fast asleep. Her hat was off, her soft brown hair framed her face, and clustered over the low wide brow, and round one little ear in short infantile curls. The face was lovely in its peaceful repose, the features delicate, regular, yet preserving an entire individuality, the complexion clear and pale like that of a tea rose. The slight, well-proportioned figure was delicately rounded, the small hands, browned a little by exposure to the sun, were exquisitely formed. Altogether there was something so winning and attractive in the sleeping figure that Frank's eye and fancy were at once captivated.

Of course it was an unjustifiable liberty, but out came his sketch-book, and he at once began making a rapid but truthful little sketch of the sleeping maiden.

Probably his frequent and earnest glances had a disturbing influence upon the unconscious model, for before the finishing touches had been put, the eyes opened suddenly, and met those of our artist bent intently upon her.

Dolly Tremaine (Frank knew it must be, from the likeness to the brother he once had known) rose quickly to her feet, a rosy flush mantling in her pale cheek, whilst the expressive features put on a look of severe dignity strangely at variance with the sweet, open, flower-like face.

"I think, sir, you cannot be aware that this is private property."

Frank took off his hat. His spirits rose to the occasion.

"I owe you an apology, Miss Tremaine. I believe I have the honour of addressing Miss Tremaine?"

Dolly bowed; but her face in no way relaxed. It was not wonderful any one meeting her in her father's park should guess her name. It was taking an increased liberty she thought to presume to address her by it.

"I fear I am no better than a common trespasser, and I tender you my humble apology. My only claim to your pardon lies in the fact that I was once the friend of your brother."

The girl's face changed instantly; a tender, tremulous wave of feeling swept visibly over it. She made a step towards him, her beautiful dark eyes sought his face, wistful and sad.

"My brother? Did you know Arnold? Please will you tell me your name?"

"My name is Rivers."

"Are you the Mr. Rivers who was so good to him in Venice? Oh, I am so glad to be able to thank you?"

"Indeed, Miss Tremaine, I did very little."

"Arnold told a very different tale. He talked so much of you. But for you, he said, he would have died before ever he reached home."

"I was so sorry to hear of his death last autumn."

Tears sprang to Dolly's eyes, and sparkled on the long lashes.

"Thank you, yes, I am sure you would be. He never got over that malaria. But please come to

the house, papa will be very glad to see you. You will lunch with us to-day, will you not?"

"I wish I could; but I am obliged to be in town this evening. I must pursue my way to the station immediately. Very many thanks, nevertheless, for your kindness."

"I am so sorry. I hope we shall see you the next time you are in this neighbourhood. My brother's friends are always welcome at Tremaine."

She held out her hand to him, he took it reverently, and by a sudden, strange impulse carried it to his lips. Then he turned quickly away, lifted his hat and strode hastily from the spot.

Dolly stood looking after him with a bewildered look in her eyes and a flush on her cheeks. Then she looked down at the hand he had kissed, and walked home very thoughtfully.

"So that is the heiress of Tremaine," mused Frank as he pursued his way; "the 'Dolly' he used to speak of so lovingly and call to in his delirium. No wonder. If I had a sister like that I should worship her. She is a woman made to be worshipped. Frank Rivers, you do not go there again. As sure as you meet her, you will fall in love and fool away your life's happiness for an idle dream. She is a star out of your sphere. She is an heiress. You will be for years a struggling young doctor. By the time you reach affluence, if ever that time should arrive, she will be long married. In no case can you aspire so high. Therefore keep out of her way, and never see her again. Be content with your sketch, for it is all you will ever have of her. Such is life. Heigh-ho!"

II.

THEY met again two years later. It was in a crowded ball-room. Frank was what he had prophesied: "A struggling young doctor." His practice was small. He had enough to live upon in comfort, and no more. But he was popular, he was a gentleman, and was unencumbered by female relatives; so he was asked to many houses, and especially to many dances.

Dolly Tremaine, a beauty and an heiress, was the belle of the season. He had heard of her, but until this evening, they had not met.

"I am so glad you have come, Mr. Rivers," said his good-natured, fussy hostess, with whom he was very intimate. "Some of my best dancing men have failed; and I must find good partners for Miss Tremaine—it was so *kind* of her to come on such short acquaintance. I cannot set her down to dance with 'clod-hoppers,' as my girls call them. Do come and let me introduce you."

Frank's heart beat rather fast. Would she know him?

She knew him at a glance, and held out her hand with sweet, spontaneous friendliness, whilst a very bright smile flashed over her fair face. Two years had developed the lovely girl into a lovelier woman, whose chief charm nevertheless lay in the gracious frankness and unstudied simplicity of youth, which contact with the world had failed as yet to tarnish.

Whilst they exchanged greetings and formalities the music struck up.

"This is an extra, I hear. May I have the pleasure of dancing it with you, Miss Tremaine?"

This was like Frank's assurance, as he had already written his name twice on her programme but Dolly seemed in no wise affronted. She smiled assent, and they sailed away, followed by many admiring glances and murmurs of "What a handsome couple!"

"You never came to see us, Mr. Rivers," said Dolly with an accent of reproach.

"I have never been in that part of the country since."

"Do you live in London?"

"Yes."

"And what are you? You don't mind my asking, do you?"

"Not in the least. I am a medical man."

"Are you? I think I am rather sorry for that."

"Why so?"

"I hardly know; but I don't think I like doctors very much, I would rather you had been a barrister, or an artist, or perhaps a clergyman, only then I suppose you would not dance and that would be a pity."

"Are you very fond of dancing?" asked Frank amused.

"Very, when I have a good partner," she answered gaily. "Do you know this is my first season in town?"

"Is it really?"

"Yes, really. I am dreadfully old to be only just 'out;' but papa cannot stay in London, and I cannot bear leaving him all alone. But this year he insisted and asked some friends to come and keep him company during my absence. So here I am."

"Enjoying yourself immensely, I suppose?"

"Yes. I think it is all delightful," she answered with sparkling eyes. "It is just like fairy-land. But I suppose in a few weeks more I shall be very glad to get away from the crowd and noise, back to my dear old home. I think I like best just what I am doing, and the place where I am in."

"And the company?" asked audacious Frank.

She looked at him gravely for a moment, and then broke into a little rippling laugh.

"Do you want me to say I like you, Mr. Rivers? Well, I am very pleased indeed to have met you again, I don't mind telling you that much. And—yes—I do like you just now, because you dance beautifully!"

That night Frank trod on air. He was in the gayest spirits and talked brilliantly, yet his thoughts were far away from the partners he discoursed. His eye followed one graceful figure through the mazes of the dance—his ear strained to catch the tones of her low, musical voice. His brain was on fire with wild dreams and hopes. He counted the moments till he could claim her once more.

That time they strolled out upon the balcony. The moon was shining. They were alone. A graver, tenderer mood was upon Dolly. Her silvery laughter was silenced now. In low tones that grew a little tremulous, she said—

"Mr. Rivers, I want so much to ask you, will you tell me about Arnold? There were only the two of us. I can't remember my mother. We were everything to each other."

"I know that your name was always on his lips." And then in subdued and reverent tones, he talked to her of him that was dead.

More than one tear gathered on the long lashes

that veiled Dolly's dark eyes, as the narrative went on, but when Frank paused to say—

"I fear I am distressing you, Miss Tremaine,"

She answered—

"No, no, please go on."

And when he had done, she turned and held out both her hands in a sudden impulse of gratitude, whilst broken words of thanks fell from her lips.

Then he took her back to the ball room: and lost her quickly in the giddy throng.

This was not the only time Frank saw Dolly that bright June. Like a moth fluttering round a candle, the young doctor hovered round the fair young girl, whose beauty and graciousness captivated him more and more. He was not alone in his admiration. She was ever surrounded by a throng of devoted followers, who were ready to live or die for her, and whom she treated with the most puzzling impartiality and kindness, yet contrived to keep them all at a respectful distance.

She had always a sweet smile and a welcome for Frank. Whilst in her presence he lived in an intoxicating dream. When absent from her he lived in the thought of their next meeting. He would not think, he would not reflect. He had a dim consciousness that this state of things could not last; that one day darkness would fall upon him and swallow him up, that she would marry one of her wealthy, titled adorers, and that his bright dreams and airy castles would be shattered at one blow; but he put this thought back, and lived only in the blissful present.

But a time of awakening came all too soon.

It was after a day of cloudless happiness—a day of which Frank could afterwards retain no distinct impression, it was like a summer sunrise, shrouded in a dazzling golden haze.

He had joined a river picnic party. She had been there. He had walked with her in shady woodlands, rowed her over miles of sparkling river, had listened all day to the low, sweet music of her voice.

He went home to dream, and found himself faced by stern reality. He was utterly, hopelessly in love; and honour forbade him to declare himself.

"I will never be a pensioner on my wife's bounty—wife indeed! Are you so besotted with vanity, Frank Rivers, as to suppose that she gives one thought to you. She is kind and gracious to all, it is her nature, and if she smiles more sweetly upon one who was her dead brother's friend and who alone of all her admirers is poor and struggling, it but shows the divine beauty of her nature. The heiress of Tremaine is not for you; and unless you wish your life hopelessly spoiled, you will take yourself off at once and see her face no more. A few more meetings and you will lose your head, and receive your dismissal at her hands, and be infinitely humiliated at the same time."

Frank was a man of decision. He seldom hesitated long over any resolution. His mind was made up in a few hours.

War had broken out in America. A friend there had written advising him to go out and make a name for himself and perhaps a fortune too. The excitement and danger just suited Frank's mood. His own practice was almost nothing. All his patients were leaving town. Two days sufficed him to make his arrangements, and he left for

Liverpool without one parting word to Dolly. He had courage for most things; but not for that farewell.

"My dearest Dolly," said her friend and chaperone the day of the water-party, "now that the season is so far advanced, you must really make up your mind. You know that a smile from you is sufficient to bring any one of them to your feet. You must not keep us much longer in suspense. I shall be most anxious to know when your choice is made."

"Perhaps it is made already," and Dolly ran laughing from the room, having utterly declined to be more explicit.

"Oh Frank! why don't you ask me to marry you?" she murmured as she flung open her bedroom window and leaned out. "I think—I am sure—you love me. I have never loved any one but you. Are you too proud, because you are poor and I am rich? I like you all the better for that; but you must not let pride spoil both our lives. If you won't ask me, I shall have to ask you. I suppose I may, as it is Leap-year," and a little soft laugh broke from her here. "Oh, Frank, Frank! you are very stupid. I thought I made your way plain enough to-day. When shall I see him again? In a week perhaps. What a long while to wait! I wish men were a little cleverer. They do need such a lot of telling. A woman would know directly. I saw he loved me almost from the first. I believe I shall have to tell him straight out before he will understand. Oh dear! if it were any of the others I could do it in a moment, 'with a smile,' as Mrs. Graham says, but I suppose it is just because he is quite different from all the rest that I love him so."

"By the way, Dolly," said Mrs. Graham four or five days later. "That handsome Mr. Rivers has gone off to the American war. Mrs. Taylor suspects that you have something to do with that sudden move—so be careful, my dear, how you break more hearts. I hope he won't get killed."

Next day Dolly went back to Tremaine, graver than of old, but hopeful still and bright; always sweet and tender to all, but wonderfully interested in the American war.

III.

FRANK RIVERS prospered on the other side of the Atlantic. The tide had turned in his favour, and wealth and fame flowed steadily in upon him.

In two years' time, he came back to England, and settled in London once more. He had no lack of patients now. Very soon he took a house near to the park. An aunt, lately widowed, came to him, and kept his establishment in order. She visited his needier patients, worked assiduously amongst the neighbouring poor, and was beloved alike by him and all who knew her.

Frank made speedy and diligent inquiries after Dolly.

"Oh, haven't you heard? No, she never married, no one could make out why; but it was a great misfortune, for her father was ruined in one of these dreadful bank failures and died from the shock. No one knows exactly what has become of the daughter. They were in Germany when he died, and she remained there, teaching English

and drawing, I believe. There is a rich uncle, but he quarrelled with Mr. Tremaine and refused to help them; and she declined help from friends. I have heard nothing of her for a long time. I don't even know where she is."

Frank went about looking more grave, and thoughtful than was his wont.

"My dear boy," said his aunt one day. "You should get married. You want a wife to make a cheerful home for you. An old woman is not companion enough for a young man of your temperament. I wish you would seriously think of marrying."

"Be sure I will do," he answered, "when I find the right woman;" but he sighed even as he smiled.

One day shortly before Christmas, as he returned from his daily round, his aunt met him in a state of some anxiety and excitement.

"Oh, my dear Frank, I hope you will not be vexed at what I have done. Perhaps it was foolish and wrong; but somehow I couldn't help it. You know Mrs. White who lets lodgings and was ill a few weeks ago? I went to see her to-day, and found her in great perplexity. A young lady who lodges with her and goes out teaching, gave her notice the other day, because she could not afford the rent of the rooms now that the holidays had deprived her of her work; and so Mrs. White let the rooms, and the new people are to come in to-day. Well, last night the poor young governess was taken ill, to day was so weak and ill that she was not fit to go anywhere, and had no place to go to. Mrs. White was at her wits end; and I went up to see the girl and try to settle something. To tell the truth, Frank, I fell in love with her, she was so sweet and pretty and *quite* a lady; but so young and helpless, it was too pathetic. See had no relatives to go to. The lung and the short of it is—I *hope* you will not be vexed—I brought her here. I ought to have waited to ask your leave; but I think I lost my head; and she was so grateful and sweet about it. So here she is on my bedroom sofa, and I wish you would come and see her, for I am sure she is very poorly, though not exactly ill, I think."

Frank listened with a smile to this agitated narration; then he stooped his head and kissed the old lady.

"My dear aunt, this house is yours as well as mine. Be sure I shall never object to your carrying out the dictates of your own kind heart; and now where is my new patient?"

The old lady led the way in great contentment; but she was by no means prepared for what followed. Hardly had Frank stepped within the room, before he paused with a great start, and from his lips broke the involuntary cry—

"Dolly! my darling!"

And the pale, sweet faced girl lying on the couch started too, and with smiles and tears struggling for mastery in her face, flushed now with sudden joy and hope, held out her hands, with the whispered word—

"Frank!"

At that moment his aunt thought it advisable to beat a retreat.

"You were too proud to marry me when you were poor," said Dolly, by-and-by, lifting her head from its resting-place on his shoulder, and looking into his face, with eyes that shone with joy and love

through a mist of happy tears. "Suppose I am too proud to marry you now I am poor?"

But Frank stopped her with a kiss.

"We have had enough of pride now," he said, "and I have been well punished for mine."

Nevertheless it was not a portionless maid whom Frank did eventually marry; for before the great event took place the rich old uncle died intestate, and Dolly came in for the whole property. She bought back her dear old home from the hands of strangers, and they divided their happy married life between Brook Street and Tremaine.

Sundays were almost all spent at the country house, and their favourite walk was one lovely glade in the old park, where Frank would always pause at one particular spot, to tell her how he had once fallen in love with a beautiful girl he had found sleeping there amongst the wild flowers of Spring.

SHE OR I?

I.

WEARILY ebb the joyless hours
That bring not the light of my soul's
desire;
A frost has smitten youth's fragrant flowers,
And my brows are girt with the branding fire
Of a vain regret.
Oh, joys that were touched with no thought of
guilt!
Just tasted, then rapt from these eager lips!
The cup is broken, the wine is spilt,
And misery looms like a world-eclipse—
Can I ne'er forget?

II.

Was I to blame if I thought that love
Had a language of silence all its own?—
If I fancied her feelings were lifted above
Dull earth, and her voice took a softer tone—
When I came anear?
For her looks were so kind, and so kind the touch
Of her dainty hand as it lay in mine;
And her kiss—do I dwell on it overmuch?—
Was warmer than Italy's summer, divine
As a scraph's tear.

III.

And once, as we wandered, my darling and I,
O'er the dunes when the day was nearly done,
"How sweet is the marriage of sea and sky
In the golden glow of the setting sun!"
She murmur'd, and wept.
Then with kisses I soothed her, and, hand in
hand,
We stood on the marge of that rock-bound
coast,
Till darkness curtained the peaceful land,
And the wan, wet mist, like a graveless ghost,
O'er the waters crept.

IV.

Never again—ah, God!—did we meet,
Though our parting was rife with all tender-
ness,
And I listened long for her fairy feet,
When the slow moon, pallid with love's excess,
Sought her throne, star-led.

She came, like a dream that wafts the soul
To regions of beauty, set apart
For youth with its faith in love's radiant goal;
And, ere I could question my own sad heart,
Like a dream she fled!

V.

As the perfume that clings, like a golden cloud,
To some queenly rose was the fatal grace
That flattered my youth, in a presence proud,
With the pride of the heirs of a noble race,
Yet how sweet withal!
Was she to blame—where you lie full low,
Heart that she gladdens not, answer me!—
If that grace was so much like love? Ah, no!
'Tis I who was false to myself—not she!—
Yea, I woo'd my fall.

VERNON ISMAÏ.

MEDICAL REMINISCENCES.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

IV. HOPE : A TRUE STORY OF TRUE LOVE.

A MINUTE consideration or investigation of the working of any feeling or sentiment of the mind, lands the student very speedily in the mid-ocean of psychology.

Here he finds himself at a great disadvantage: for he is surrounded by agents which he knows to be all powerful to act, but the motors of which he can neither fathom nor understand.

If he dares to assume the rôle of mentor, he is even worse off, for how can he, being in the dark himself, show light to others? How can he, being blind, lead the blind, or how can he guide others through a labyrinth, the key to which he does not himself possess?

But, granting that the student knows something, has found something out, has struck some little spark, has cleared some tiny spot in the mist, even then he will experience great difficulty in explaining to those he would teach, the truths which he fancies are patent enough to his own understanding. For language fails him, single words are feeble and non-expressive, and if he resorts to verbosity his description loses focus.

There is one remedial agent the name of which you will not find inscribed in the books of the apothecary, nor in the Pharmacopœia, but which has been known to physicians for centuries, if not for thousands of years, and is prescribed almost daily by wise practitioners—its name is *Hope*. Like many other powerful remedies, it must be prescribed with much precaution, and the greatest care. It must be administered—if it is to be administered at all—with sincerity. No relation or friend or physician can give it, if he does not himself possess it. There must be truth behind the hope, truth to back it up, then in most cases it may be given heartily. I say in *most* cases, because I know one occasion in which hope given too suddenly and ill-advisedly, produced a joy so delirious as to cause death.

Parenthetically, let me mention the circumstances. A poor sailor lay ill at the hospital of S—. He had little hopes of himself. He was

a faint-heart. At home in England he had a young wife and baby, to whom he was greatly attached, and whom he had an idea he would never see in life any more. But we, his surgeons, had no such bad hopes of the case. We eventually, however, came to the conclusion it would be better to invalid the man home, and thus give him every chance of speedy recovery. The hospital sergeant immediately after hearing of our intention, hurried away to the sick sailor's ward, and thus suddenly told the man the news.

"There is nothing," cried the sergeant, "wanted to make you well, so the doctors have just said, except a long sea voyage, and so they have made up their minds to send you home."

The sailor started half up in bed, his eyes glittering, his teeth "chittering" (so it was described to me).

"Oh God!" he gasped, "I shall see my wife again—so soon—and little Nellie——"

He fell back instantly—dead!

This may read sensational. I cannot help that. It is true.

Yes. Hope is a powerful agent for good, when it can be given to a patient in candour and honesty. I have to regret, however, that it is too often withheld—from mere want of thought—by members of my profession. It is not always deemed necessary perhaps, and yet a word of hopeful, cheerful encouragement from the doctor, is often the only thing needed to turn the scale in favour of the patient, and lead to a speedy and happy convalescence.

But who amongst us can thoroughly understand the action of this remedial agent Hope on the mind, and, through the medium of the mind, upon the body.

Hope, it appears to me, works for good in two ways, and herein lies the mystery. For *firstly*, it may emanate from the body itself, towards the mind, or soul, or consciousness, and, being in the latter, studied, thought out, considered and adopted, it is reflected therefrom to the body as a healing power. Instance: hope is one of the first signs, in a great many ailments—I don't say all—the doctor has that his patient is going to do well. The hope may arise in the first instance from a mere cessation of pain and uneasiness in the afflicted part, which give the nerve centres time to rest and obtain nutrition. The ultimate nerve cells of the brain "fall into their ranks" as it were, ready for more healthy action, ready to resume their sway and power over the life movements of the body. This same falling into their ranks of the nerve cells may be due to a greater amount of nutrition supplied them, and purer blood from administered food or medicine.

The mind becomes every hour more sensible of the improvement that is being effected, and hope increases in a direct ratio, till health is established.

Secondly, hope may arise in the mind itself, it may be generated there by the words, or looks, or actions of the medical man, the attendants, or of friends and relations. Here again there will be the same "falling into their ranks," as I have called it, of the nerve cells, the same resumption of sway over the body with the same happy result, even though in this case the mind has to struggle with a weak and enfeebled, it may be diseased, body which has not yet succeeded in making a start towards recovery.

Despondency is quite the reverse of hope. The latter is a natural stimulant, or tonic as the case may be, the former a depressant.

These facts only prove to medical men that the greatest caution over words and actions should be maintained in holding intercourse with patients in some cases, especially those in which the nerves are finely strung, for verily, verily, a word may kill, though a word might cure.

I was lying ill—very ill—once in a strange town with only an old woman as an attendant. The doctor had opened his mind to her pretty freely, and she took no pains to conceal from me that he had no hopes of my case at all.

I crawled out of bed next day when I heard the wheels of the carriage on the gravel. As the doctor stepped out he gave one short glance up towards the windows. How well I knew what it meant. *He was looking to see if the blinds were down.*

I will never forget that.

"Faith" said He, who spake as never man spake, "can move mountains." I do not think that this is mere figurative language. For Hope in itself, invisible, intangible, incomprehensible, has power over matter, over visible, tangible, solid matter. Is this not a proof, I ask, that man is possessed of a soul, and that there *does* exist a spirit world, to which the soul really belongs? To me it seems so. But now to leave this psycho-physiological diatribe—which, I fear my readers, who have not actually skipped it, must think dry reading—and to give an example in the shape of a story, of the power of Hope, the main incidents, of which are from the life.

It was one of those dismal dark October evenings, when the fact of being at one's own fireside, is a pleasure in itself.

The wind all day had been roaring through the bare, purple-brown hedgerows, whistling among the leafless branches of the elms, the oaks and the limes, and bending the tall wierd-looking poplars, as if they were but willow-wands. Even the birds had been blown hither and thither with their feathers all awry; the robin, shivering on his perch on the gate, had looked more like an animated cricket ball than anything else, and had given up all attempts at singing. So had the speckled breasted mavis, who only the day before had made

Echo ring frae tree to tree, certain in his own mind that spring had come. To-day he had seen no sense in singing, seeing that the notes were blown out of his bill ere they were half uttered, and whirled away to the back of the north wind. The blackbird had uttered many a peevish shriek, because he had been obliged to keep low down on the grass, and the Persian cat had been stalking him from the other side of the hedge.

The rooks, who had made efforts to fly to their happy hunting grounds, some five miles across the hill, had lost heart when half way, turned tail and been blown back again in a few seconds.

There had been showers of rain and sleet too, and now the night was as dark as ink, and occasionally the hail rattled against the panes of my casement window. Without, the wind was still rustling and roaring among the soft-needed Austrian pines, the arbor vitæ and Portuguese laurels.

Just an evening—in my opinion—to enjoy reading a pleasant article in a magazine, or a good novel; not with feet on fender and body in high-backed chair though—such a position is not suited to people who know aught of the laws of health—but reclining, let us say, on a couch, with a happy-looking fire at a respectable distance, and a glorious lamp diffusing a soft atinic light throughout the room.

My wife likes to be near the fire, however. My wife was there now. No good preaching to her about the laws of health, she likes to be cosy. She was sewing or knitting, in a quiet pre-occupied kind of a way.

High over the wind rose the shriek of a railway train. The line runs through a cutting about a quarter of a mile from here, and even as she emerges she makes her presence known by a dull roar—heard only when the wind isn't high—and an eldritch scream.

"That is the last down train," said my wife. "Miss B——, your intended visitor, won't come to-night."

"What?" I said, looking up abstractedly from a *Blackwood's Magazine* that I held in my hand. "No! Of course not."

"Shall I lock the doors?" said Sarah, entering.

"Why it is too soon surely," I replied, "it is not much past nine. The down train has only this minute gone."

"But she is half-an-hour late, sir, fully."

"Well, in that case—but—stop—listen. There is some one there. Something stopped at the gate, I think."

There was a canine chorus outside that ever heralds the approach of strangers after night fall—the yelp of angry collies, the fluting of Scotch terriers, the bell-like baying of a blood-hound, and the deep threatening bass of a lordly Newfoundland.

Then the bell rang, and two minutes after I was seated in my study, *tête-à-tête* with Miss B——.

"You will think all this very strange," she said. "You must think me very strange, and"—she coloured slightly—"romantic as well."

"My dear young lady," I replied, "I think you neither strange nor romantic, I have seen so much in so many parts of the world, that I do not think anything strange. But one minute—before we talk—you are late, you cannot leave here to-night."

"Yes, I am late, unfortunately I took the wrong train, or rather the train to the wrong T——" *

"That was a pity," I said, "you must be so tired?"

"Not very much so. My cab is at the gate, and will take me to an hotel, when our interview is over."

"No," I answered firmly, "our guest's room is unoccupied, and you must be its tenant to-night. This is a gloomy old house, but we haven't a ghost, you will be far more at home here than at our village inn, which you dignify by the name of hotel."

Miss B—— smiled and I was victorious.

"Now," I said, "recurring to your fear that I

* There are ten T——s in England. What's in a name? A good deal, if you take train to T—— in Hants, while your friends are waiting for you at T—— in Bucks, or Berks.

would consider your conduct odd or romantic in coming to consult me, I am vain enough to think there is nothing strange in this matter. You have read medical articles of mine in a magazine, they struck you as sensible, and you bravely make up your mind to come and take my advice personally about a person you are greatly interested in, but who could not be induced to come himself. What is there strange in that? It is, neither odd nor uncommon.

"But now to business," I continued. "I must tell you that I cannot come to see the invalid, except in the company of his own personal medical attendant."

"I know," said Miss B——, "that your rules of professional etiquette are very stringent, and I would not expect you to disobey them. But we—my father and I—are leaving R—— and coming to stay in your immediate neighbourhood, the air of B—— is too bracing for father, who is old; the climate here—you have said in your writing, is mild and calmative, without being relaxing."

"Exactly so."

"And Frank, who, as I have told you in my letters, is—was—O! dear!"

The poor girl broke down and sobbed for a short time with her face in her handkerchief. I did not attempt to check her. There is nothing so soothing to a sore or a sad heart as tears.

"I know, I know," I said "Frank is your intended husband. He is coming on a visit to your father's house—but you fear Frank will die. Well, I trust he will recover. But I cannot give you hope till I have seen him."

"But you *can*," she replied, firmly, pleadingly, "it is for this hope I have come here, for this hope I have travelled so far, even against my father's will. I wish to take that hope home with me. However little it be, I cannot go back without it."

"Your father," I said, "did not refuse you permission to come here?"

"No," she answered, "I am my father's only child—I have no mother—and he is so good to me. He would refuse me nothing."

I knew before she spoke what her reply would be. I do not wonder, I thought, at your father refusing you nothing you ask of him. A more beautiful girl than Miss B—— I had seldom seen, but she had what they call in Scotland "such a good face." It was sincere, earnest, trusting, true.

"And neither can I refuse you anything," I continued. "You ask me then for hope, I give it; and I tell you that from all you have written about Frank's case, he is not in the last stage of consumption, by any means; therefore he may get well with care, for I am one of those who not only believe but *know* that consumption is curable. But the hope I am able to give you now rests principally in an opinion of mine, that your intended husband is suffering from debility caused not entirely by the illness he is being treated for; that this debility is naturally making him appear worse than he is, and that if it be removed or its cause be removed, which is the same thing, he will have a ten-times better chance of eventually getting perfectly well."

"I cannot sufficiently thank you," she said, the tears coming once more to her eyes, "nor reward you. We are poor. My father has only his half-pay."

"So far as I am concerned that is neither here nor there," was my answer.

"And, Frank," she went on, "has had to give up a lucrative situation in the city."

"I have one other question to ask," she resumed after a pause. "It is this: Do you believe in change of climate as a cure for con—for the illness dear Frank is suffering from?"

"In many cases it acts like a charm," I replied.

"Oh! I'm so glad and happy," she exclaimed.

Well, it would have seemed to any but a medical man a strange way to express happiness, for out came the handkerchief again.

She was happy no doubt, hopefully happy, but the heart was big and full, and she was slightly hysterical or nervous withal.

She explained that a relation of theirs had offered Frank a passage to Australia in a sailing ship, that he would leave him there for a time, and return for him and bring him back—well and strong she trusted—to his own country and to her.

This was Miss B——'s dream of love and happiness, only there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

I was not sorry now I had given this innocent, loving girl the hope she had entreated me for—only I had some misgivings. But in this case I determined not to do things by halves, so I pulled a book from one of my shelves.

"These words," I said, "are written by a good authority. They refer to change of climate in cases of phthisis. Shall I read them?"

"Do," she said.

"The invalid," I read, "leaving this country for Australia, will generally find the long, uninterrupted voyage round the Cape of Good Hope in a comfortable ship, much to be preferred to the more exciting and often fatiguing route by Suez and Galle. The best time for leaving England is from the middle of October to December, when the new home will be reached in from 80 to 90 days. Thus supposing the traveller to arrive about the middle of February, he will find a pale-blue, cloudless sky, with the thermometer about 90° at noon, but without any unpleasant sense of heat. With a feeling of new life, general exhilaration, and a good appetite, he will experience a desire to be at work. The difficulty seems to be to persuade the phthisical that they are not already entirely cured; and that the general rules of hygiene must be adopted, and anything approaching to excess avoided, to prevent the pulmonary mischief from again starting into activity, or to escape congestion of the liver, or that he may obtain and retain health and vigour."

Yes, I had my misgivings; I was raising hopes in the heart of this poor girl that might after all be rudely shattered, and that soon. She listened to every word I read with wrapt attention, with an eagerness indeed that made me positively uneasy for the future of herself and the patient I had not yet seen.

Well, at least I did all for the best, and I sent Miss B—— to bed happy.

The B's became not-far-off neighbours of ours soon after this; and I had the satisfaction of making Frank's acquaintance, and of finding out that I was right in my opinion of his case. The mischief was not irremediable. A better supply of better blood would set up the healing process. The quiet and calm of the long sea-voyage and the purity of the ocean's breath would quieten

and invigorate; Nature and warmth would do the rest.

Away went Frank's ship. I felt sure that he could bear the voyage, the first portion only of which would be, or might be, rough, if she (Miss B——) could bear the long separation. She did not look over strong. He was going away with hope in his heart; that hope would tend to make him well. She remained behind with hope in her's—a hope that I dreaded to think might one day be changed to despair.

I managed to ride over to Elm Tree Cottage about once a fortnight, and found Captain B—— always the same—what is called “excellent company”—a genuine, genial gentleman, always hearty—a man of the world, and an old soldier.

Miss B—— said she always longed for my visits. Over and over again did she make me describe to her all the outs and ins and *agremens* of life at sea in a sailing-ship during a voyage round the Cape.

“What do you think?” she would often ask, “is Frank doing just at present?”

Then, before I could answer this semi-childlike, but anxious question, I would have to make a mental calculation of Frank's probable latitude and longitude, to get at the time of day in his quarter of the globe. After this, it was easy enough to fill in the picture.

Well, Frank was sailing over the wide ocean in reality, but Agnes and I went with him in a voyage of the mind.

Together we crossed the world-famed Bay of Biscay. We did not have a storm there, but the sea was rough, and the weather cold. The nights, too, were long and dark, and we spent the evening down below in the cosy little, well-lighted saloon, and retired early to our state-rooms and cots, to be rocked to sleep in the cradle of the deep. We were always up at eight bells, and on deck, which had been washed and scrubbed, and was quickly drying white in the morning sun. We always gave a look up aloft where the sturdy sails were bellying out before the breeze, sometimes giving a mighty flap or two, which showed she was pretty close-hauled, and straightening out the sheets, till they looked like monster 'cello strings, and rattled the very belaying-pins. But we soon got hungry, and went below to a glorious breakfast, at which we laughed and chatted immoderately with the captain, who told us about all the wonders that were only waiting to be wondered at as we went on our voyage to Australia.

We read books and wrote letters, and a log till luncheon, and what with one thing or another the day passed right cheerily till dinner-time.

It was quite an event with us when we got so far south that summer dresses had to be donned. Then one day we had a peep at the peak of Teneriffe, and we called at Madeira and got ashore, and commenced wondering at once.

South and south till we got into the trades. How sparkling and bright the sea was. The ship's decks were snow white, the very sails seemed bleached, the sailors got browner and jollier-looking every day; down in their mess they sang in the evening—glorious old sea songs, with a lot of “High!” and “Ho!” in them, or they gathered

around the foc's'l head, and smoked and yarned and laughed.

Dolphins danced in the ship's wake, or played about the bows, skip-jacks flew from wave-top to wave-top, and now and then a solitary whale was seen, ploughing his way steadily and in quite a business-like fashion, north or south.

But the wind fell at last, and we got into the doldrums, rolling, glassy seas, fierce heat, blazing sun-light, melting pitch, that one's shoes took up and spotted the white decks with, awnings spread, punkahs constantly going down in the cabin, manufacture of cooling drinks, drowsy languor and listlessness, but Hope with it all, Hope that nothing could put down or extinguish.

Then we were in the south-east trades, and off and away again.

We roughed it rather round the Cape, then went steadily eastward-ho. Every day now raised our hopes, we were strong and well. We got into a gale of wind; we defied it. We laughed at the roaring wind, for the new world was all before us.

“Had ever we been feeble, ill, ailing?” we asked ourselves. There was some tradition in our minds to that effect, but it must have been at some very remote period of our existence. Bah! dismiss the recollection, banish the thought; who could think or dream of sickness in this pleasant sunshine, in this bounding, happy ship, on this glorious sea?

And so we reached the far-off land, and I had such a deal that was new to tell Agnes about the towns or cities, and life therein, and about the strange scenery and curious flora and fauna, that I was rapidly settling down into a kind of an animated gazetteer, when one day—hurrah! the post brought a letter from Frank.

I had it to read; it was a tender, manly epistle, redolent of health and hope, descriptive of all the voyage out, which was not unlike what I have just described, and Frank's arrival in Australia. There was plenty of love in it, and plenty of longing for the happy time when Agnes should be the bride of Frank, and they should both settle down in the beautiful country he had come to.

Some months went by, then another letter came.

Frank was starting on a long voyage in the same ship; they were going to China, but would return to Australia, when after a time they would sail once more for dear old England's shores. But the best part of the letter was the postscript. It said: “P.S.—Oh! by the way I forgot to tell you I am in perfect health, and really enjoy my life.”

And now commences the sad part of my story and it is well I should be brief. No more letters came. Months and months and months went by, but neither his ship nor Frank was heard of.

She was a lost ship, and the insurance was paid on her.

What hope could I—a sailor—give to poor wretched Agnes B——? None, absolutely none: But I knew that in her heart and mind, two feelings were struggling for mastery, one was hope, the other despair, when she lost the former, the latter would be triumphant, and she would sink and die of a broken heart.

I did not now go very often to Elm Tree Cottage; I did not like to look upon Agnes as she was now, her young beauty slowly but surely fading week by week. Nearly a year went by, when one morning I was sent for by Captain B——. I

hastened over. It was as I thought—Agnes was ill, I had no power to do much to save her. I prescribed nerve and other tonics, wine and extra nutrition and lastly a change to the Isle of Wight.

When she went away south, I never expected to see her again.

But truth is stranger than fiction.

It was just such another night as that on which Miss B— first came to my house, but rather later in the year. We were thinking of retiring, the door bell was rung not violently but sharply.

In another minute Frank himself stood before me.

I hardly knew him, he looked so hearty, brown and strong. He gave me little time to ask questions before he himself became the interrogator.

"Where is Agnes? How has she borne it? Is she well?"

I told him all.

He would go at once, he said and see her. He had already been at the cottage, but found it shut up.

He would do nothing of the sort I told him. I must go. And go I did, but Frank went with me. He stayed at the hotel in the little town of S—n till I had seen Agnes and broken to her gradually the glorious news of Frank's return.

Not so gradually though as I had hoped to do. There was something in my face or manner I suppose, that made her suspect the truth as soon as I commenced to talk about Frank.

"Oh, he is come," she cried, half frantic with hysterical delight, "he is come, he is here. Doctor, don't deny it."

What more could I do, but go and fetch Frank forthwith.

When both she and he were calmer, sitting together, the four of us, in the front parlour of the little cottage they occupied, with the last rays of sunlight trembling over the sea, Frank told his story, his adventures.

It was a sad tale of the sea, of shipwreck and life among savages, and of a ship that came to the rescue at last and brought away all that was spared. It is too long to tell now. Some day—*quien sabe?*

Frank and Agnes have gone to Australia. They are settled there at S— and both I believe are well and happy.

IN BAD HANDS.

A Story in Eleven Chapters.

BY F. W. ROBINSON,

Author of "Grandmother's Money," "Lazarus in London," &c. &c.

CHAPTER X.

THE BREAK UP OF THE MINSTRELS.

WE can more easily and briefly explain the mysterious behaviour of Master Phil Wharton by looking in upon the home of the "Minstrels of the Tyrol" on the morning preceding Phil's second visit to the Miles's. The Minstrels were seriously depressed, and yet nervous and excited; there was trouble in the house of Wharton, or in the house which they tempor-

arily occupied, and it was considered that Foxy Wharton was "not quite himself" by a very long way indeed. It might be even said that he was "beside himself" with rage, being a man who took any little ailment with great discomposure of mind and spirit, and broke into much bad language under any affliction with which he might be visited. If there was one thing more than another which put him out completely, it was the fact that he was not feeling as well as he could wish. And he liked to feel well and strong, with a grand capacity for eating and drinking—especially drinking, which he always thought agreed with him.

Yesterday he had not been first-rate—qualmish, in fact, with shivers. And now all day he had been troubled with a splitting headache, and possessing a large head, there was of course more ache in it than there would have been in people's heads of less abnormal development. He had come home very drunk the night before and quarrelled all round with the members of his band, and knocked down the German for screaming at him in a foreign language he did not understand, and had thrown himself on the floor to sleep in a somewhat excited and heated condition. There he must have caught cold and cramp, for he woke up with this headache, and with pains in his joints and with no appetite, and with most unpleasant swimmings, and a general inability to make use of his limbs—all of which signs of bodily prostration he anathematized freely, and raved over, and wondered at.

Still he was determined to go out with the minstrels as usual that morning. There was no one whom he could trust to collect the money, and he was not going to be robbed at his time of life, just when a little more prosperity, and an opportunity of drinking more freely, had presented itself, thanks to a liberal public. But when he rose to put on his felt hat, he found a difficulty in walking, and the first half dozen steps into the street were accompanied by such a formidable attack of "staggers" that he sat down on the pavement to consider the question afresh, and to look helplessly up at the seven dusky faces looking down at him.

"Have any of you fellows been trying to poison me," he asked suspiciously. "Have you Phil?"

No. No one had been trying to poison Foxy Wharton. No one had dreamed of such a thing. The German, who had been knocked down last night, thought it was not at all a bad idea, but it had not suggested itself to him before.

"I can't go any further," he groaned; "help me up and take me in again."

"Shall I run for a doctor?" asked Phil.

A doctor! Mr. Foxy Wharton here expressed his mind, firmly, strongly and most fully upon doctors in general, declining their interference and threatening to kill, or gouge the eyes out, of the first medical practitioner who came to do him any good, or even to so much as look at him.

"Take him indoors and let him rest; he should be better before the morning was over. He was only a bit queer on his legs—spasms perhaps, or indigestion."

They helped him into the front parlour and put him on an old sofa there, which did duty as a bed for five of them during the night, Phil and the

two foreigners sleeping in the room above, when there was a chance of sleep, Phil's father being fond of late hours, and cards, as well as ardent spirits. It had been a dispute over the cards which had led to blows last night; they were at it when Phil had returned from the organist's to his lodgings and gone up to his room *via* the zinc waterspout outside.

"You chaps go and do your best without me. And don't keep any of the money. I know what it will come to pretty well," he said, "and I'll look you up later on, I daresay."

"All right."

"And, hi!—here—Phil will stop with me," roared forth Mr. Wharton, "he sha'n't stir a step."

A blank look of dismay settled on the countenances of the itinerants.

"We can't do without him. We sha'n't get any money without him," grumbled the spokesman—a shadowy figure in our story whom we have once seen cowering in the back seats of the church of St. Eustace—an old friend of Foxy's, and a man who spoke his mind at times—a prime mover in the capture of Phil Wharton twelve months since.

"I tell you he sha'n't go," shouted Mr. Wharton, "isn't that enough?"

"You can trust him with us," said the man persistently, "we can see after him as well as you. We're not likely to let him go, are we?"

"I'll keep an eye on him myself. He stops here," cried the father.

"Very well, then we'll all stop," was the obstinate reply, and the musicians unpacked their instruments, and pitched their felt hats into a corner, and the German, with a strong want of consideration for the headache of the manager, began tuning up his double-bass.

Mr. Wharton looked at them indignantly and then doubtfully, and finally, to their amazement, when they had settled down, and taken out and lighted their pipes, and filled the little room with tobacco smoke, he burst into tears and began to moan and gesticulate like a big child.

"Blest if he isn't going soft," exclaimed a minstrel; "what's the matter now, Foxy?"

"To be treated like this—after all I've done for you—you infernal vagabonds," he cried, wringing his hands, "I won't stand it—I can't stand it! Phil, reach me something off the mantelpiece to throw at them. That flat iron will do."

"Phil better not do anything so silly," muttered the Frenchman.

"Take him with you then—get out of the place, let him run away and ruin us, as he means to do. I know—I know all about it. Get out all of you, before I go mad looking at your cussed ugly faces," he went on whimpering and raving, "just leave me to myself."

The men rose, and prepared once more for their exit. Phil went to his father's side.

"I would rather stop with you," he said.

Mr. Wharton scowled at him, and dried his tears with the back of a huge dirty hand.

"What's that for?"

"You're ill, and not fit to be left," explained Phil, as he looked at him very thoughtfully.

"What do you know about it?"

"And I'd much rather stop—oh! so much rather, if you'll let me," pleaded his son.

"Well—I'm blowed," muttered Foxy Wharton.

He lay and considered this proposition, staring hard at Phil until a fresh shivering fit seized him, and his great white teeth rattled like a pair of castanets.

"Go—why don't you go? Every one of you," he screamed at last, "don't you see the money we're chucking away! Phil, you won't run off and leave us?"

"No—not now."

"Say, 'wish you may die, if you do.'"

Phil said it to please his suspicious parent, but he still remained at the bedside and looked imploringly at the others.

"Leave me with him," he said at last, "he is my father, and I have a right to stop."

"I tell you to get away," said Mr. Wharton, "I hate the sight of you." And Phil, at this paternal remark, got up and departed with the minstrels forthwith. But he could not sing that day; his voice trembled and was out of tune, and he thought in his heart he was going to be ill like his father.

"Something's the matter with the boy," thought the visitors, and the absence of the big, bland Mr. Moriega was explained to a few inquirers who were full of sympathy. Phil looked round once for Mr. Miles and his wife, but true to their new line of policy not to look conspicuous and arouse fresh suspicions, they were not upon the sands, and presently, and before the entertainment was over, Phil slipped away and went back to the little cottage near the pier.

Here he found his father much worse, and a neighbour from next door attending upon him, and endeavouring to pacify him. At sight of Phil he was a little calmer, and the ruling passion was strong in him for a moment again.

"What's the take this morning?" he inquired hoarsely.

"Three pounds odd."

"Where's the money?" he asked, "who's got the money?"

"Biggins."

"Biggins is a thief, and will stick to the lot if we don't look after him."

"I don't think he will."

"You did not run away then," he said, after a long pause.

"No."

"Why didn't you?"

"I—I couldn't leave you like this," replied Phil in a low voice.

"Why not?"

"I may go when you are strong and well again, but I shouldn't like to slip off to-day," said Phil thoughtfully. "I don't know why, except it seems so strange to leave you now."

Foxy Wharton glared at his son, and tried to speak again—this time failing and making a miserable noise instead. Phil ran out of the house, and on his own responsibility went in search of a doctor, whom he brought back with him and who pronounced Mr. Wharton, *alias* Moriega, in a very bad way indeed, although extremely guarded in his opinion as to what was the matter with the gentleman.

He recommended perfect quiet, and the withdrawal of the minstrels to another lodging, and Foxy Wharton was too ill to utter anything by way of protest. He could just stretch his hand out towards his son, and say in a sad piteous tone,

"Don't go away, Phil," and that was his last coherent phrase for a considerable period of time. He was raving with brain-fever before the day was over, and the news took an exaggerated shape, as news will, now and then. and the worthy souls of Tenby were scared the next morning by the information that scarlet fever or small pox, or scarlet fever *and* small-pox combined, had seized upon the "Minstrels of the Tyrol," and heaven and the doctor only knew how many of them were down in it. This alarming news was circulated in the market-place on Saturday, and detailed over shop-counters and at street corners, the result being that when the "Minstrels of the Tyrol," *minus* the Moriegas, father and son, appeared upon the sands, there was a general stampede away from them, and they were left to two empty bathing machines, a blind man and a dog with a tin mug in his mouth.

There was a hurried consultation as to ways and means, and by the afternoon train the Minstrels hurried away to Milford, and were fiddling and singing in the streets that evening with but un-different success. They would have taken Phil away with them, but he refused to go and was deaf to all entreaties, threats or promises. The law was very clearly on his side now, and as the members of the company did not see well how to break it with impunity, they hastened away and were seen no more in Tenby. Were seen never again, we may add, by Philip Wharton or his father.

CHAPTER XI.

"IN GOOD HANDS."

MANY days passed before Mr. Wharton, better known to the Welsh folk as Moriega, was conscious enough to become aware that his band of singers and players had vanished away from him. When he came back to himself, or to his senses, he was very strangely weak; and life lay before him very strangely too, like a steep up-hill track over a foggy moorland, and in crossing which rugged way, so weak and faint as he was, the odds were that he would die.

Phil thought he would die, though he had never faced death before, or known anything of the signs and shadows of it; the neighbours, sympathetic in their rough homely fashion, were sure Mr. Moriega was not long for this world; the doctor, in his heart of hearts, had not any hope of him. The fever had burned itself out, but it had burned away the life of the man too, and here was almost the end of it, unless signs and tokens, neighbours prophecies, and doctor's forebodings were all equally delusive.

The first sign of his better estate in one respect was in his recognition of Phil sitting by his bedside watching him attentively, with his thin hands upon his knees.

"Have you been there long?" he asked in a faint whisper.

"Not very long," was the reply.

"Since the morning when I was taken ill?" he asked again.

"Off and on—yes."

"For how long now?"

"Ten days or more."

"Good lor, you don't say so!"

Then he put his hand up with a great effort to his head, which he found smooth and shiny as a billiard ball. This was a new surprise, and not having struggled out of his delirium a perfect Christian, as people always do in very proper books, he took a long breath for a good swear, and got through most of it before he gave over suddenly.

"Don't go on like that now, father," cried Phil.

"Because—why?"

"Because you mustn't."

"Oh! mustn't I? We'll see about—who the blazes has been and shaved my head?" he asked indignantly, but very faintly still.

"The doctor."

"I'll about kill him when I get round," he muttered, "see if I don't, the brute. What business—"

And then Mr. Wharton had to give up, being entirely pumped out of breath for that occasion.

"You are to keep very quiet, father," said Phil, "and to be kept very quiet."

Mr. Wharton did not answer. He lay and looked at his son steadily until his eyes closed by degrees, and he passed away again into dream-land.

Later on in the night, he mustered up strength to feel his head very carefully again, as if exceedingly perplexed by its smoothness and spherical conformation, and to mutter—

"He'll pay for his larks presently. A pretty game to be up to when a fellow couldn't help himself. Phil!"

"Yes, father?"

"Where are they all?"

"Gone."

"Run away? The lot of them?"

Phil nodded.

"Why didn't you?"

Phil did not reply to this.

"They asked you?"

Phil nodded again.

"Ah! I think I see," were the last words he said that night.

But in the morning he saw more than that, as men sick unto death do see at times, when the great Hand draws the curtain aside. The doctor came, and told him, after Phil had been sent away upon some errand, all that Phil had done to nurse and watch him, and help those who nursed and watched along with him; he spoke of the unselfishness, even of the affection of the boy, distressed and amazed at this man of mighty strength and force reduced to such a strait as this.

"Do you think he's sorry then?" asked the sick man, wonderingly.

"I'm sure he is."

"It's not likely. About as sorry as you are for making me this infernal scarecrow of a Chinaman. What did you go and —"

"There, there, you must take things very calmly, Mr. Moriega. You must not excite yourself in the least," said the doctor, laying his hand gently on the shoulder of his patient.

"How would you like *your* ugly head shaved?" muttered Wharton.

"I should be glad, if it gave me a better chance of life," was the ready answer.

Foxy Wharton considered this; then he said very sharply—

"Has it given me any chance?"

"It was necessary. It——"

"Look here. Am I going to pull through, or to die?"

"That is in God's hands, not mine."

"What do *you* think?"

A doctor does not care to be pressed for a definite opinion as to the condition of his patient, but the man seemed anxious to know the exact truth, and there might be reasons why he should.

"I am afraid, my poor fellow," he said, after another moment's hesitation, "that you will not get over this."

"You know I sha'n't."

"No, I don't know," said the doctor.

Foxy Wharton did not ask any more questions; did not say much during the rest of the day—only towards evening he made a sign to which the watchful Phil at once responded.

"You want me, father. What is it?"

"Ask that—organist chap—to come and see me," he whispered. "Look alive—I'm getting precious—weak."

Phil gave a frightened look at him, and darted away. Half an hour afterwards he and Folkestone Miles, and a third figure, who stood in the background, were in the room together.

"Who else have you brought with—you?" the weak man asked feebly.

"A minister," said Phil. "Mr. Miles thought you would like to see him presently."

"I—don't want any minister," he answered with a hard laugh. "What next?"

"Shall I send him away? Ask him to come to-morrow? Tell him——"

"No. *Let him be*," muttered Wharton; then he turned to Folkestone Miles who was looking at him through his glasses very curiously.

"You've been a friend to Phil," he said; "do you mind—my saying—thankee?"

"I am glad to have your thanks."

"He has—a wonderful—voice. Look after him, will you?"

"I will," was the promise given here.

"Thankee again. He's been in bad hands—but it hasn't—spoilt the boy."

"No."

A smile—a very strange smile—lighted up the broad, white face for an instant, as he whispered very faintly—

"In good—hands—now!"

Philip Wharton is a great singer at the present time—a rich man, it is said, and one who makes good use of his riches, and turns not his back upon old friends; takes trouble even, people say, to find out old friends and help them in his way, as they helped him, in old times, in theirs. There are a few who set him down as a trifle too eccentric even for a popular professional. He is bringing out an oratorio in which a Mr. Folkestone Miles is deeply interested, and which Francis Poofor, a musical critic of light and leading, and who writes oratorios himself, says will fail, let Wharton try all he may to force it down the throats of the public, and take the principal tenor part in it, and all that nonsense. But Philip Wharton says it shall succeed, and slaps the back of Mr. Miles, —who is his sole and permanent accompanist at all the concerts, and who is doing very well indeed—and adds that he means it to be the big hit of the season.

Yes—an eccentric man, Mr. Wharton. He walks all the way to the Westminster Bridge Road to have his hair cut at Broadbrook's "Hair Cutting Saloon and Fashionable Emporium"—an establishment all plate glass front, wax dummies, and ivory hair brushes—and how Mr. Broadbrook managed to start such a business as that, all of a sudden too, no one in Lambeth, aware of Mr. Broadbrook's antecedents, has ever been able to make out.

Phil Wharton knows, and Folkestone Miles can make a very tolerable guess.

THE END.

A DAY IN SUMMER.

BY HARRIET KENDALL.

MELODIOUS trance!
The dreamy murmurings of bees and flowers
Aglint with dewy fringe;
All things as fair
As though each hour did hinge
Upon a sunbeam, and the life of care
Were for awhile forgot, and all life's pains.
The gilden chains
Of sunlight trail athwart the odorous bowers,
And lovingly enclasp the drowsy pines
Which sleep uncertainly,
Fretted perchance
By the soft drip, the silver harmony
Of ductile rivulets, which fling aside
Their nectar to the shores which dumbly seek
For more and more;
While water-lilies chide
The tiny waves that into dimples break
Upon their crest till every chalice shines,
Or dart away in many an artless freak
Along the reaches of ambrosial gloom,
Where dew-stars, woven like tissues in the loom
Of flowers and grasses, spread
A banquet for the gods, rich offering, meet
For fabled deities. What is so sweet
As to beguile this life of half its years,
And bask once more in youth's delirious joys,
And think its ravishments are more than toys,
Are things that time can never mar with tears?

A peaceful lake
Enmirrors deep the beauty of the skies
With azure soft as blue of infants' eyes,
While languid willows bow
To their own shadow in the limpid glass,
Which doubles all the rainbow dyes that pass
Into a maze
Of wondrous loveliness before the gaze.
Long, latticed lines
Of light melt into many a purple change,
Where snowy cloudlings range,
O'er streaks of carmine with a lazy grace,
As here and there a flake
Of downy amber, pillowed on the brow
Of some high mountain, half absorbed in haze,
Doth lose itself in all the varied shades
Of lustrous amethyst and green, which lace
The sky from west to east where Orient glows
The orb of day on many a breaking rose.
Arcadian glades!

Where it would seem ill-timed for tongue to prate,
Where waves of verdure softly undulate
In blossoming luxuriance, while birds
Send challenges from wood to wood, and fays
Tread graceful measures to the blackbird's lays;

And many a floweret spells
Its little history in neighbouring dells.

Flowers have not words
For language, but, like music, stirring deep
The poet's soul where memories never sleep,
Their language is from worlds to which thoughts
tend
In loftiest moments, and half comprehend.

HEART-YEARNINGS.

BY HORACE VICKARS REES.

WE read, at times, of hearts whose throbbing has ceased, and of lives whose hopes are dead, and that they live throughout the remainder of their span, crushed and hopeless. It is difficult to believe this. Where is the human heart without a longing; where is the human life without a hope? I venture to think that neither exists. Even the wretched suicide, who has lived his life, and persuaded himself that there is nothing remaining to him here but canker and decay, goes down to his death with a horrible hope—the hope of oblivion. To the end of his existence he is propelled by a longing.

It is pleasanter to reflect upon the thousands around us who do hope on patiently to the end, who wait in beautiful, trustful faith for God's good time to bring them to the fulfilment of their heart-longings, and yield to them that which they desire; the thousands of our own Christian faith alone who lean their lives throughout the dull weariness of probation on the promise of the singer who sang, "O, rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

The learned and unlearned sceptic may scoff at this, and point in refutation to the thousands who journey to their end with their heart's desire ungranted. What matter? The sceptic may be right, but I hold the simple thousands who go down to their rest with their faith in God's better knowledge unabated to be in happier wise than the questioner who "knows not what we know." For it may well be that they find the fulfilment of their heart's desire beyond.

And here, in connection with our learned sceptic, I may be pardoned for a slight digression anent a stray thought which occurs to me, and which may be well illustrated by the beautiful comprehensive words which I have just quoted: "O, rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire."

They tell us, some of these mighty and masterful savants who cloud the world of our simple enjoyment with their ponderous questioning, and look down upon us from their lofty heights of nebulousity with pitying scorn, that our dear English language is a barbarous, cribbed and untutored tongue; a scanty piece of machinery even for the dullards that we are, and yet—and yet this beautiful comprehensive thought that I have written

here above is of our despised English language—the outcome of a translation into the vulgar tongue assuredly, but this fact alone throws the truth of this negation of the savant's argument into greater relief.

For the language that has given to us our version of the Scriptures is likewise that which causes to shine for us, clear as noonday, the subtlest thought of such diverse poetical thinkers as Shakespeare and Charles Dickens; it is also the language that lent itself so readily to produce the beautiful melody of rhythmic sound in which George Eliot was wont to clothe her higher flights of thought.

And yet our English tongue is barbarous, cribbed, and untutored; the tongue that has given to the whole world the greatest poetry that the nations can produce, the tongue that even now is the mother tongue, save the one solitary exception amongst our neighbours, of the four great living singers, whose singing finds echo in the hearts of the cultivated or the quickened pulse of the masses! The thought is ludicrous.

Where may be or what may be the soul of the self-satisfied savant (I can see him now with his high black neckerchief, his pince-nez, and his sublime air of incredulity), who can con those self-same words on which I have built this slight digression, those dozen and odd words that contain a whole world of beautiful feeling, a whole plethora of poetry, and then turn to us with a pitying shrug of his stooped shoulders, and express his profound regret that a nation stimulated by such reasonable desires to emerge from the barbarous darkness in which it is blindly groping, should fail to reach that glimmer of light which would shed a flood of truth and wisdom upon its unmusical mind. The words doubtless are meant to convey something; *Monsieur le Savant* will go so far as to admit that, and to our brute intelligences it is possible, in the opinion of *Monsieur le Savant*, that they may in some dull measure appeal, but beyond that—their music and poetry—bah! well, beyond that, *Monsieur le Savant* can only shrug his profound shoulders. And yet these same words were sufficient to draw from the divinest musician of our century the divinest song of his soul. What is that to *Monsieur le Savant*? Felix Mendelssohn was as barbarous as ourselves; his compatriot, the enlightened scientist, Herr Wagner, has proved that to the perfect satisfaction of our friend the wiseacre. Well, let us shrug our shoulders in our turn, and be content; we will keep Felix and his barbarisms, and leave the German, god of tongue and trumpet to our eclectic critic.

The heart-yearnings of Humanity! What a sum total they would make, could they be laid bare in one vista to our gaze! What a hidden world of comedy and tragedy would burst upon us in this motley panorama!

The common-place, generic passions of mankind, that serve the novelist as corner-stones in the fabric of his endless romances, and give to the philosopher a basis on which to moralize or to build up his science of humanity—what are they compared to the inner secret life of humanity, the life that we, the outsiders, wot not of?

The little children have their heart-longings; you see the dim reflection of them, mayhap, in a little upturned angel face, seeking for something

that is denied to its young life. Looking for love, it may be; the love that is the breath of life to these little ones, but which death or neglect has robbed them of. And an unutterable sadness steals into the heart of the little lonely unit, and the cot, untouched by the gentle mother hand, is but a weary, desolate resting-place to the little troubled soul. For such a child as this will weep its heart out on the unsmoothed pillow, and think, mayhap, in its little confused way, that God's universe is covered with a great cloud that shuts out from its young life something that should be present with it, but which the child-mind knows of only by its absence.

There are, too, the heart-yearnings of youth, when the boy attains the time of budding manhood, and all the world looks fair. What a merry, happy time it is! How we, of sober manhood, look back upon that time, and wish that it might be our's again! We look upon the budding manhood of our sons, and think what a piece of inconsequential, irresponsible frivolity it is, and yet we envy it! We find ourselves wishing that we were inconsequential, irresponsible frivolities ourselves again.

But we must not laugh at the thoughts and the passions of the time of youth. It is a merry, careless time, and harmless; the world would be happier if it might know only perennial youth, and the dullness of age were swept away from its ken. But it may not be, and youth, like age, serves its little turn in this world:

As on the whirligig of time
We circle with the seasons.

The time of youth is rich in heart-yearnings. Then it is that the youngster, boy or girl, begins to find that he or she possesses a heart that is made to yearn. He, for his part, cleaves to the maiden of his secret choice, his heart yearns for her, but his poor inexperience does not permit him to raise more than half an eye-lash towards her. And his soul will go out in bitter outpourings concerning the want of comprehension displayed by maidens in general, and this maiden in particular, who probably is sublimely ignorant of his devotion, and is, in her turn, feeding her soul upon some hopeless yearning for another Adonis-like being, whose heart, as yet, does not yearn for anybody. So runs the world away. Well, well, as I ventured to remark before, we must not dare to laugh too much at the thoughts and the passions of young people, for it is far easier to laugh than to suffer. And I doubt not that they suffer much in their little romances, and that their souls sicken with the non-fulfilment of their secret desires as readily as those of an older generation are bowed down by disappointment.

I think, indeed, that too little is made by sober age of the heart-longings of youthfulness; that we are too apt to speak of young folk's desires as "childish nonsense," and so forth; for the worm may enter into the young bud, and eat into its better life unknown and unperceived.

But what shall we say of the heart-longings of old age? It would be thought that after the heart had passed through the fierce light of the noon-day of life, the yearning for comfort and plenty, and the longings of ambition or what-not, that it had reached a haven, the haven of old age, when it might be still and at peace. Alas! it is yet a tur-

bulent time for the longing soul. Mayhap it is a deserted, weary old age, and the longing for love, as with the little child, encompasses its being. Or it may be that the beloved one has wandered astray, and the trembling heart, remembering its loved one as it was when it babbled in its innocence at the mother's knee, yearns in secret to fold the stray sheep again to her bosom, if only for the sake of those dear, forgotten times—forgotten because they are lost to the memory of all but her. She nourishes them in secret, and while those of the younger generation are prattling about their little cares, she, with lack-lustre eye, is dreaming of the child who has passed from her life, who is to those around her but a name to be whispered, but who is to her poor longing soul a thing of flesh and blood, to be yearned for as only the heart of a mother may yearn.

And yet I doubt not that she finds comfort—aye, eternal comfort—in that promise of the singer for which *Monsieur le Savant* has his ready sneer: "O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire." This is faith, beautiful faith.

This is but a brief paper, and there is one outcome of this secret heart-desire which I must touch in brief. That is, the indefinite, indescribable heart-yearning which finds its vent in religion. It is a good and wholesome emotion, this hidden void in the soul, which the love and worship of God Almighty fills, and it yields to those who grasp it an ecstasy that no other human emotion can surpass. It partakes of that faith which is the scientist's bane, but which I, in all humbleness, hold to be an essential part of our latter day life. For Faith is a wonderful gift, a God-given gift; it is a thing like music, an indescribable entity which feeds the lives of thousands around us. Do not let us call this faith, which moulds the multitude, a thing of priestly witchcraft, as the savage opponents of Deism, intoxicated by the audacity of their arguments, would have us call it. It may be that the rolling of the years will bring our children's children to a time when faith is an unknown quantity in the economy of life, and we of this darkened age can but pray that some effulgence, which is denied to our clouded sight, may burst upon the unborn millions, whose fathers are now nourished by this same faith, to supply its place in their lives, ere they cast them adrift from this sheet anchor that now grapples securely the millions of mankind.

Far be it from me to decry the advances of science, or the efforts of the scientists, for science is the keyhole of truth; but let us, before all things, be straightforward. If science should prove, in the hereafter, that God is not God, and the mournful theory is breathed into the minds of men, woe be to the men of light and leading who shatter the hope of their fellows, if they do not raise up some embodiment of the divinely Beautiful to fill the void that the higher yearnings of the human soul will ever feel.

But we of this age may almost rest free from this surmising and lean our heart-yearnings still upon the promise of the singer. The cloud is upon us, no bigger than a man's hand now, and it is upon a future generation, mayhap, with a wiser intelligence than ours, that it will burst. May this future generation of our flesh and blood emerge from out its fury unscathed.

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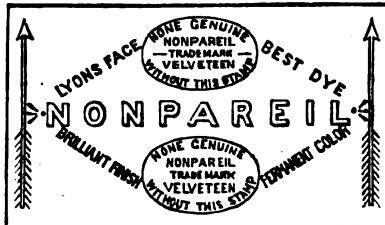
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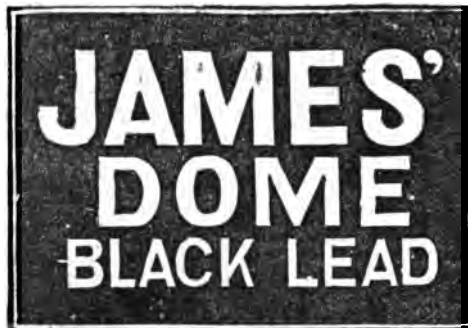
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LONDON: FEBRUARY 14, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

MY LADY'S VALENTINE;

OR, THE ROMANCE OF A ROSE-BUD.

BY M. L. JENKIN.

CHAPTER I.

THEY always called her "My Lady," this wild young Diana Shirley, though she and the whole of her belongings were of no higher rank than belongs to a country lawyer of birth. Such a man was her father, such men she, if she had had any suppositions on the point, would have supposed her two brothers would grow into.

Nicholas and Harry were "cramming" law as they phrased it, and were up in London; Geoffrey had swallowed a fair share of the paternal gains in being coached for the army and in the purchase of his commission. He was away in India; six months ago he had been home on leave, and by his presence and his doings had enlivened the quasilness of Soberford, as the town of his birth was called.

There was a married half-sister, and down at the end of the family chain was Di, "My Lady," as some one once called her, and as the boys had concluded to dub her.

So stood the family history of the Shirleys.

February was well in, and the weather was just the most piercing and the most brilliantly cold that one can well imagine. The seasons had as usual been indulging in their customary vagaries; there had been a green Christmas and a budding January; now February was standing up for the rights of winter and asserted herself to the full.

Nick and Harry had run down for some skating. They came in on Friday night, had a long day on the ice on Saturday, and got through Sunday as young men in the country easily can do.

They tramped over to Thorborough for the service lunched with Nick's godfather, the canon, spent the afternoon somewhere else, and smoked the pipe of peace with their brother-in-law, the doctor, in the evening.

There Di turned in on her way home from church. She took off her hat and she threw down her gloves, shaking her head, which owned a crop of short brown hair, and knelt before the fire.

"The infants are all in bed, I suppose?" she said in a doleful tone.

Her brother-in-law pointed to the clock with his cigar.

"Pantomime is of no use," said Harry; "what does my lady know of the habits and customs of the infant man?"

"She knows quite enough," answered Di, in mock anger. "Quite enough of mankind at any age. Brothers indeed, and I am left alone the whole of this blessed day! Don't I like a walk? Don't I like—there! I've no patience. I have come to stop here, Tom, if you've no objection, just to raise my spirits."

"Her spirits generally want that little filip on Sunday nights, don't they?" Nick suggested.

"I am not bound to answer him, Di, am I?" said Dr. Maxwell.

"I leave it entirely to your own judgment—where is Mary?—up stairs?"

"Very probably."

At this point a voice was heard calling, and as Di opened the door on the way to her sister the call became distinct.

"If that is Di, send her up to me."

The girl disappeared, and a shriek from a small boy soon followed. Sleep in the nursery was a thing beyond control, when Di made her Sunday night appearance.

Presently the supper-bell rang, and Di came running downstairs.

"I'll come and kiss you before I go, Tom, if you promise to go to sleep. There's a delight for your active mind to dream about!" She opened

the study door, and stood. "Are you ever coming, you three smokers? I am ravenous."

"Where's the lady of the house?" asked Nick.

"Coming"

"Come!"

The answer was given over Di's shoulder by a tall, fair lady. She and her radiant fairness made the brown, gipsy-like Di strike out a vivid contrast. The two girls were like the two different mothers, but each one had the fire and the vigour of their father underlying her own manner.

"Do you go by the early train to-morrow? because if so, I wish you could manage to run round to—"

"No, Mary, we do not," answered Nick. "We are going to wait one hour later, so that we may examine My Lady's valentines."

"I do not accept such vulgar things."

"Vulgar—whew!"

"They are a most unmitigated farce," Di ran on. "As if I did not know that you two boys sent both mine last year! There is no fun in that. A real mysterious thing, coming from a myth, who lives in No-man's-land, is the only fit notion for a valentine."

The night went and the morning came, and the postman took a small packet addressed to "Lady Diana Shirley."

There was a roar from the boys.

"Lady Diana Shirley!—as good a joke as any I've heard!" and Harry, with his hands in his trouser pockets, sauntered out of the room, and down a long passage which communicated with Mr. Shirley's office.

The packet was a most unnoticeable-looking thing, of so moderate a size as to be beneath the notice of the parcel post; neither did it boast any of the erratic caligraphy so many valentines are graced with. A plain, firm hand gave the name and address; there was a quaint bend at the ending of each name, which to an expert would have been a key-note of individuality.

Di had just cut the string, when Harry came back, bringing his father with him.

Mr. Shirley's grey eyes laughed. Though he was much older than one would have expected Di's father to be, he drooped with none of the failings of age. His back was not bent, though his grey head had the forward sinking between the shoulders of one who reads and pores closely: he was very short-sighted. His face was white, and seemingly bloodless, yet once let him speak or once let him hear a word addressed to him, and the colourless face was alight with intense vigorous intellect.

"And is that what you have brought me to see? Fudge! Call that a valentine?" And he made as though he would beat a sharp retreat.

"It's from 'furrin parts,'" informed Harry. "What client now has gone abroad?"

"I shipped the whole Ducie family off to Canada last month—thirteen."

"Tom Ducie. You have hit the right nail on the head, sir."

"You think so?" and Mr. Shirley squeezed together his eyelids and set the whole gleam of his piercing, short-sighted eyes to bear upon Nick and his ready tongue. "Tom Ducie is a gentle-

man if he is a bit of a scamp—in my opinion he would not send a valentine to Di."

"What arrant nonsense you are talking, Nick; would Tom address the letter 'Lady Diana Shirley,' and is Canada within reach of Bordighera?"

"Bordighera!" and Di clutched the packet. "Where did you make that out?"

"By reason, by acute logical inference," and Harry struck an attitude. "I see French stamps; I see one legible postmark for my clue; also I see 'B-o-r-d,' and a smudge of sufficient length to cover the remaining letters of Bordighera. Now?"

His father's eyes twinkled.

"Good, good. Logical induction, acute perception," said he half, more than half, to himself. "But can we follow up that evidence?" he said aloud, thrusting his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, and letting the lappels of his old-fashioned dress-coat fly back. "You have a fact to follow, Mr. Counsel for the Discovery!"

"Assuredly, assuredly; it will be stated by my learned friend—yourself."

"Me?" the old man started back.

"My supposition is that a client unknown to the family in general has seen and has been conquered by the charms of My Lady." Here Harry came down from his stilts, and said, "You bring lots of fellows in to lunch, sir."

"I do, I do. But I bring no such young jackanapes who would write that impertinence, 'Lady Diana Shirley,' and he pointed a finger of offence at the still unopened packet.

"We don't know any one at Bordighera, and you know we don't," plunged Di. "Do, for goodness sake, break the seals. I would like to see whether there is anything worth having inside. It is quite easy to copy postmarks, and quite easy to stick on some old foreign stamps. You two have done it."

"By the nine gods he swore!" quoted Harry. "You are mistaken, My Lady."

"Yes, they're real." Mr. Shirley was examining stamps and postmarks, and had the packet held even with his nose. "Open it, child."

"It is what I have been endeavouring to do, father of mine, only you all talk so much now!"

A second more, and the mystery was declared. Stop! The mystery gave one spark of enlightenment, and fell into deeper mystery.

Within the paper covering was a slight wooden box, and within the box were three opening buds of tea-roses.

"Dear! How lovely!" cried Di. "How funny, though! just three, and no more."

As she lifted the third she gave a little start.

"Ah!"

Beneath the last fragrant delicate bud there lay in decided prominence a dry, withered wild rosebud.

Nick declared afterwards that My Lady's face was redder than any rose, while in answer to him Harry as strongly asseverated his conviction that she "went deadly pale."

Both were true.

Di knew when that old faded bud had once been in her own possession. One jumps at a conclusion sometimes; and she made no doubt of what rosebud it was. Her gay, glad life had one small chapter of history, in which a rosebud had acted

one scene; but, to tell the truth, the whole business had been pushed to the background by numerous other small histories—histories of flirtations we mean. Of course Di Shirley could flirt. There are flirts and flirts; of the one extreme sort which society labels “Bad,” “Dangerous,” she had no knowledge, and could have had no desire to imitate.

So far, however, flirtation had not slipped on into any graver deeper feeling; the girl was in the hey-day of her glad youth, and she had never yet attached any special meaning to the words of her worshippers.

Why then did she blush and why did she the moment after turn white?

One cannot tell. We may suppose as much as we like.

“You are satisfied now that we had nothing to do with it?—answer, My Lady!” cried Nick, after a few moments silence, in which Di looked at her flowers, and in which everybody else looked at everybody else.

“Yes, I exonerate you,” would have been the girl’s natural answer, but—we get these impulses now and again—something told her to hide her secret, and she twirled round with her four roses in her fingers and faced Nick with a toss of her wilful young head. “I am nothing of the sort!” she burst.

“There is no knowing the depths of you; and as to my knowing anything of any one at Bordighera it is simply a farce!”

“A farce—is it?”

“Certainly. I know heaps of people, and I am sure they would all be only too charmed to send me roses if they knew how I loved them,” she laid her special ones against her rosy lips with a daring caress, “but I never heard of any one of my friends going to Bordighera.” Then she ended her astounding piece of gay conceit by a cool statement of matter-of-fact. “As they are principally people of the neighbourhood you should know more than I can do.”

Harry looked at his father.

“Would you not like to see My Lady in the witness box, sir. The audacity of her!”

“I should like to hear what you could do in cross-questioning such a witness,” and the old man twitched his mouth with a nervous habit he had.

“Daddy dear!” and Di pushed one hand within her father’s arm, “he’d be a perfect nonentity. With equal wits what can a man do against a woman? He’d get nothing out of me.”

“Because there is nothing in you to be stolen, eh?”

“You dare to say that; how dare you? I am ashamed of you, sir. I shall go and leave you; I must put my roses in water and keep them to the day of my death. Wear them next my heart for love of the giver—my Mystery Man!” So saying she ran out of the room.

“She knows,” said Harry sententiously.

“I don’t think so,” said his father, “What do you say, mamma?”

“I think she may guess, but we know Di’s many flames. The next post may bring some more packets and this will be forgotten. When she thinks twice about it, it will be to feel offended at the address. ‘Lady Diana Shirley’—it is going rather too far!” Mrs. Shirley was the one mem-

ber of the family who made apparent show of upholding its dignity.

CHAPTER II.

One word of explanation.

During Geoffrey Shirley’s spell of leave he had been here, there, and everywhere. When Soberford could make sure of him it had made fêtes in his honour, as might be expected, and of course the family pride, his mother’s pride especially, was glorified at having so noble looking a young officer to exhibit to the admiring public. Probably some female minds had been exercised with a view to the future, a future which the young man’s coming was to colour with the possible vague aggrandizement of matrimony.

In a word, brother officers must come down and be entertained by old Shirley. Let the sentence bear its fruit in the quick soil of imagination.

Geoffrey disappointed Soberford. He only brought one man down, and he a senior officer. The girls were left and the grave Major carried away a governess—henceforth the best school of Soberford was left as a flock without a shepherd.

Romance was over, for at last there remained but one week of his leave.

A ball was given by Sir Everard Morpeth, of the Grange, to celebrate the coming of age of his heir, who was also his grandson.

All the county was present—that, of course, means all the county who were in “society,” to use what looks like a snobbism.

The Shirleys were there.

At one moment the young Everard Morpeth was talking to a gentleman who had come with a family from the other side of the county. He was a stranger to local names and people.

“Who is that girl?” asked the stranger.

“Which? Who?”

“She who just passed—in white.”

“The dark girl?” The young man stroked a fair, very fair moustache. “You want to be introduced? No chance for you, my good fellow, at this hour, My Lady will have nothing to give you.”

“Lady who?”

A spirit of mischief touched the boy’s mind; he answered with a great show of carelessness: “Lady Diana Shirley.”

“Shirley?—the Shirleys of Dorset?”

“No, not at all. They belong to us. Well, she is mine for the next dance, and so, if you like to venture, I’ll introduce you.”

“Certainly I will venture,” the answer came quietly but with a certain assurance. There is a manner which, without the least self-assertion of an unpleasant nature, seems to say that the speaker is one who wins his way. This John Holcroft had that manner.

He could be labelled as neither a successful nor an unsuccessful man, for he was one of the few who have not to strive for either daily bread or for social position. He was not rich, but he was heir to a title, seeing none stood between him and his father’s cousin, Lord Lucas of Tineley. He stood alone, and he lived in chambers; though so alone he knew people everywhere. Once he had views of literature, at the present time he was reading law with a view to future contingencies—no landowner is the worse for such learning.

Di could give him a dance, but she never noticed the offhand way in which young Morpeth introduced his friend.

He just said—"My friend Holcroft wished to be allowed an introduction—you have no objection, My Lady?" This youth and Di had known each other ever since Everard, as a boy of seven, had shielded her, a baby of three, from a huge dog at the Grange.

"I am very pleased," Di had answered.

Presently, when Holcroft and she were together, there was no naming of names and no giving of a title—of course not.

Di liked her partner; perhaps, she preferred him to all the rest. However, there was not much opportunity of considering that matter, for she could give him but one dance; and it was a sheer stroke of luck which made Holcroft see that a man who should have been Di's partner later on was carried off in attendance upon some ladies who left early. He made himself master of the occasion and took the absent man's place. Di's dress was torn.

"They are real flowers!" came as an ejaculation, while some fringe of torn lace was being cut off.

"Real! of course. Do you think I'd wear sham things in June? Roses are to be had for the gathering, and I gathered them and arranged them myself. Are they not done well?" she made a little grimace.

"I could not speak so barbaric a compliment—one does not not say to the hedgerows that they are lovely."

"You unake me feel quite ashamed!" the girl cried.

He did not heed this. "Wild roses are so fragile. How do you make them live through all this heat?" he asked.

"Do you think I shall tell you my secret?" she cried with her own wild bravery. "They said I could not do it; they said I should be in shreds of greenery with never a rose left at the end of the first dance, but I knew what I could do. I have an outrageous belief in myself."

"Is it not needful in these faithless times?" he put in.

"Yes. And I am beautiful at the end of the evening!"

"Yes."

Di felt one degree of discomfort, he said that one word so gravely. But she dashed her discomfort away. "You really look as if you thought I meant what I said for myself when I meant it for the roses!" There was a little gay petulance about her. "They are lovely still?" she insisted, fingering bits of a long linked trail of flowers and leaves and ferns which came from her shoulder to the creamy skirt of her dress. She was wearing an Indian muslin Geoffrey had brought home for her.

"They are?" said he, and he also fingered the roses. A flower and bud broke off at his touch, and the fragile petals fell about Di's dress.

She shook them off. "Clumsy!" cried she.

"I plead guilty," he laughed.

"That is very fine!" she said. "Can you mend the thing?"

"I can repent," and he seemed to take up her gay humour, and made a great show of grief.

"Just like a man—but you'll have to work

very hard at your repentance before it comes to much good."

"I must do my best," he went on. "I'll take this bad away with me to goad me on."

There is the history of the withered rosebud that came on Valentine's morning, hidden by the fair fresh roses.

Di remembered well enough. As she ran away to give some water to her mysterious gift there was quite a new joyousness in her heart.

That Mr. Holcroft? Of course she remembered him perfectly. Also she remembered, with a quaint dash of anger for herself, the rebellion she had secretly felt at being snubbed by Geoffrey on the morning after the ball. She had serenely asked him if he did not think the Weston's friend very handsome?

"Handsome? Very well for a fair man; he's to marry one of the Weston girls, is he not?"

Upon this Di relegated the memory of her partner to the chamber of forgotten things and amused herself.

We will not inquire the fate of the three pale Bordighera roses. Winter and rigour fled before the oncoming of the genial spring, nay, summer was nigh at hand, and again June was awakening the crimson buds on the hedges.

The boys came down from London, and they said one to another that—

"My Lady is growing old; she's not up to things."

The truth was that Di, by reason of much thinking, had solved a problem. All her girl's ideals of perfection, all her visions of manly beauty centred upon one experience—the experience of the Morpeth ball.

She learnt who Mr. Holcroft was, or rather she learnt who he would one day become. She rebelled, furiously rebelled. Why could he not have been a "nobody" like the nobodies of her own circle?

She should never again see him.

So times and seasons came and went, and they brought in their train a lover to Di.

Misery of miseries!

He was the most eligible of eligibles, but yet he could not win her.

Her old father was glad enough secretly that the girl would not leave him, but he and her mother talked and questioned.

Mrs. Shirley had her thoughts. A girl like Di would not refuse such a man as young Reddish, the squire's son, without some decided reason.

Lack of love might, of course, be the reason, as the girl protested, but then why could she not love the man? He was everything a girl could wish—nay, he was more than a girl would dream of looking for in her lover; that is, when she looked with eyes of common sense: we are putting out of sight love's dreamings, which are generally opposed to common sense.

The fact was an irrevocable fact. Di would have nothing to say to James Reddish.

On the very day after his leaving Soberford defeated, some of the papers—not the *Times*—had this following paragraph:—

"A Stroke of Luck.—A youth, who has for some time been a clerk in a firm of lawyers, has suddenly been informed that he is heir to a title. This will, doubtless, cause some excitement in the

circle to which he is promoted. We may be more explicit in a few days."

Di Shirley read it listlessly, as she was reading the other items of such passing information. It by no means linked itself in her mind with any person she knew, though of course she began to wonder. Should she ever see John Holcroft again? Should she ever stumble across the path of any Lord Lucas? The girl fought against her impossible fancy of love, but still, do what she would, these stray thoughts must come.

Two days after this appeared:—

"To the Editor of the ———."

"SIR,—

"In your impression of the 14th, you gave a paragraph concerning the unexpected rise of a lawyer's clerk. The gentleman in question—not a youth—has been no clerk; but last year, being our client, read law with us, looking upon such knowledge as a useful part of the education of a man of large landed property. He knew then, and has always known, himself to be the heir to Lord Lucas of Tineley. We think a stricter supervision should be exercised in your office, as the insertion of such garbled facts, is, to say the least, annoying.

"We have the honour to be, sir,

"Your obedient servants,

"GROTE AND BARBER.

"Lincoln's Inn."

We need not say that Di Shirley did not read this listlessly. For the next few days she did nothing listlessly, she was bright, wild Di, and made the old Soberford house ring again with her glad voice.

She went in and out, and, as if a newspaper were a thing to be shunned, she for a week never even looked at the agony column of the *Times*. She missed this which was one day in the obituary.

On the 19th, at Bordighera, after a long illness, John Lord Lucas of Tineley, aged 76.

Before many weeks passed, the new Lord Lucas was again staying at the Westons, and it must be supposed that while there he learnt more correctly the names of people and the localities to which those names belonged.

He had ridden over to Soberford more than once. Also, more than once he had been to the Shirley's—a great deal had come to be settled in those visits of his.

"It was intense rudeness of you to send that packet to 'Lady Diana Shirley'!" This was an exclamation of Di's when, one scorching July forenoon, she and Lord Lucas sat in the warm dimness of her sanctum with the outer blinds drawn down, and the laziest of summer winds breathing in at the open window.

He was evidently more than a casual acquaintance.

"I confess it," said he. "But was it not excusable? I could declare young Morpeth spoke of you by that name and high-sounding title?"

"I would skin him if he did!" declared she. "He may have said My Lady," because all the boys do it."

"You were angry of course—"

"Of course," she reiterated, making a little pout, and tucking her hand within his arm.

Men *may* be obtuse. He never caught her mocking tone but followed his own more weighty thought—"If you had not been yourself, Di, what might not have happened for me?" he went on. "You were right to be angry, but fancy if your anger had grown on, had lasted—?"

"Lucky for you I was *myself*?" she laughed. "My own most charming and faultless self! Shall I tell you a bit of a secret?"

"If you will—yes."

"I never cared one rap about the 'Lady Diana Shirley.' Not one bit! The paper went in the fire, I daresay, but I liked the—roses. I like them now, though they are a little the worse for wear."

"You have kept them?"

"I don't think I shall tell you any more. You are hurting my fingers, Lord Lucas!"

Nevertheless, she did not make any effort at freeing her hand from his grasp, neither did she seem to object when he lifted the supposed-hurt fingers to his lips.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever," "Juliet's Guardian,"
"Pure Gold," "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE TOILS.

THERE were all the elements of a pleasant party—a genial host and hostess, a couple of pleasant-mannered young men, a couple of nice girls, to say nothing of the good-natured, elderly Major, who had always a jest and a smile for everybody. Lanfrew ought to have contained as merry and congenial a party at dinner that night as any house in Scotland; and yet, somehow, they were neither merry nor congenial, only desperately uncomfortable, all of them. Mrs. Barrington sat self-composed but watchful, with her keen eyes constantly turned towards Janet, who looked pale and nervous, and hardly spoke a word. Kit Barrington, who sat next to Violet, gnawed at his moustache savagely, for she utterly refused to talk to him, and was carrying on as animated a conversation as circumstances admitted with Mr. Lennard, who sat opposite to her. The circumstances consisted of a large hot-house fern, and a pineapple in a high dish, which divided them like a hedge; but Violet was not to be daunted, she kept dodging her pretty head round the fern, first to one side and then the other, and kept up a little chatter with him, which, although perfectly innocent and common-place, was, nevertheless, rather disconcerting to one or two of the lookers-on. For it was plainly to be read in David Lennard's open countenance that he admired Miss Clayton exceedingly.

Janet never appeared to such disadvantage to him as she did that evening, in an unbecoming and ill-fitting dress with a white rose, her only effort at adornment, stuck in like a top-knot on

the very apex of her head. The fellow rose, gathered off the same branch, was in Violet's hair, but there it rested and nestled among the sunny coils as if it loved to be there, and had found its natural place on the graceful head that was peering from between the fern leaves of the plant, which, from the other side of the table, made a sombre setting of shiny green, framing the sweet face like a picture. Janet was constrained and silent, but Violet was flushed and eager, the lights on the table threw a soft mellow glow over her bright face and over the diaphanous blue gauze of her dress. What wonder that David Lennard sat and stammered out his answers to her playful questions—his eyes fixed upon her with the most unfeigned admiration? She and Janet did not seem to him to belong to the same creation—Janet was a good, dear girl, whom he honestly considered himself bound to marry—a useful woman who would order his dinners for him as he liked them, and be an excellent mother to his children. But Violet was like a vision out of another world—like a brilliant plumaged humming-bird compared to a sober-tinted little brown wren; and, like many another wiser and better man, David Lennard thought that he should like the humming-bird best. However, it did not come to this on that first evening, nor yet for many days to come; only he admired her very much, and nobody liked it, neither Mr. and Mrs. Barrington, nor Kit, nor Janet herself. A week passed away at the pleasant house among the Argyleshire Moors and left matters very much as they were at first. There had been no more private interviews between Kit Barrington and Miss Clayton, and what was perhaps more surprising still, there had been no private interviews between Mr. Lennard and Miss Maxwell, who might be supposed, nevertheless, to have a good deal to say to each other. Janet was now quite ready with an answer for her would-be lover whenever he should choose to ask for it, but, somehow, Mr. Lennard had not yet chosen to do so. There certainly had not been many opportunities for private conversation. It had been a fine week and the gentlemen had gone out shooting every day, and it so happened that they had gone to the most distant of the moors on Mr. Barrington's property, so that the ladies had not even been able to join them at lunch-time. The party met at breakfast-time, and again at dinner, when the conversation was, of course, general, and after dinner the gentlemen had generally adjourned at once to the billiard-room or smoking-room, where it was not suggested that the ladies should follow them. After that first evening Violet, either because she was too cautious, or because she saw no further necessity for so doing, made not the smallest effort to attract Mr. Lennard's notice. Neither Mrs. Barrington nor Janet could detect any fault in her manner to him, which was perfectly friendly and unaffected, as might be the manner of any girl towards her friend's lover. She made no attempt to talk to him or to induce him to talk to her; she only answered when he spoke to her with the same sweet smile and gentle voice with which she spoke to every one else in the house—excepting, perhaps, to Kit, whom she ignored as much as she possibly could do so, without attracting attention to the fact. And it can hardly be said that David Lennard took much notice of her. He seemed

rather to avoid the society of the ladies as much as he could, and the only fault that could be laid to his charge was that he certainly did not pay that attention to Janet which she had been accustomed to receive from him. Then there came a very wet day, and the gentlemen having somewhat satiated themselves with slaughter during the past week, decided that they would give themselves and the grouse a day's rest. After breakfast Mr. Barrington retired to his study to a consultation with his bailiff; Major Willet sought his own room to write letters, and Mrs. Barrington disappeared into the back premises on household cares intent. The young people were therefore left altogether in possession of the pleasant morning room. Kit Barrington was reading the *Times*; Janet was at her work-box, where her clever fingers were soon rapidly moving through some delicate white needlework; Violet was apparently engrossed in a novel; whilst David Lennard cleared a space on the table in front of him, and bringing out a large box full of elaborate materials, set himself to the manufacture of salmon flies.

For the space of a quarter of an hour nobody spoke a word, and Mr. Lennard toiled at his flies. But the making of flies is a difficult operation, and is said to require the most supple and delicate fingering. David Lennard's fingers were neither supple nor delicate but very big and blundering. The occupation was one for which Nature had not adapted him. For the third time he vainly endeavoured to tie a knot in a piece of fine yellow silk, and for the third time he failed. Janet, who was covertly watching him, had already quietly taken off her thimble and laid down her work to go to his assistance, when he suddenly broke the silence, and looked up towards Violet—

"Miss Clayton, would you be so kind as to help me for a minute?"

"Me?" said Violet, with the prettiest little look of surprise, as much as to say, "What should make you ask me with Janet in the room?" But she laid down her book, and went up to him. Janet took up her work again very hastily, with a deep red flush of annoyance on her face. "What can I do for you, Mr. Lennard?" said Violet.

"I want you to hold these two ends of silk while I twist this round—so; now tie them together very firmly. Can you get at it?"

"Not very well. I shall do better if I can sit down," and she drew forward a low stool and seated herself before him—literally at his feet. As she did so, she gave one shy flash of her eyes up into his face. It was but for half a second, and no one else saw it, but it was quite enough to make the young man's face flush and his hands tremble, as he held out the bright ends of silk for her to tie. Violet sat smiling and self-composed, with a face as innocent as a baby's; and yet she had been planning that look, and seeking for an opportunity to fire it off at him for the last three days! Seeing that it had told very well, quite as well as she could have expected, she did not think it necessary to repeat it.

"How beautifully you make these flies, Mr. Lennard!" she said. "I can't think how you can do them so well! You really must be very clever! Did you make these pretty red ones all yourself?"

From making flies up to making a speech in Parliament, every man likes to be told he is

clever, and does it well, especially when the pleasant flattery is spoken by the sweet lips of a lovely woman. David Lennard liked it very much indeed.

"You are very good to say so, Miss Clayton; but I must not take too much credit to myself. Those May-flies, for instance, I was helped with."

"Who helped you?" she asked, a little sharply, with a half-glance at Janet.

"Oh! a man at the shop where I bought some." Violet felt much relieved.

"Well, you do them very well without help, I think," she said lightly.

"I can do them fifty times better if you help me," he answered, lowering his voice a little.

"Shall I help you with another?" she said, quite aloud and with a sweet, unconscious smile, for it would not exactly do to let this impulsive young man begin love-making with Janet in the very room. "May I help you with another?"

"If you please."

And then another salmon fly was concocted between them. David holding the hook and Violet winding the silk round and round. She was very slow, and rather awkward about it; Janet would have done it in half the time. But he did not seem at all impatient, and Violet took no care to hurry herself. They made a pretty picture. The big, stalwart young fellow with the handsome ruddy face, stooping down over the slight girl with the graceful head who sat at his feet, whilst the bright gold-coloured silk flashed backwards and forwards between them like a ray of sunlight. But pleasant and pretty as the picture would have undoubtedly seemed to an indifferent looker-on, it did not afford much gratification to the two persons who were actually present to witness it. Janet glanced up at them occasionally with evident discomposure, and Kit Barrington at last laid his paper down and looked across the room with a face like a thundercloud; Janet turned round to him sharply with a gleam of real anger in her eyes.

"So you, too, are fascinated?" said Janet to him in a low voice.

"I look fascinated, don't I?" answered Kit grimly.

"You look jealous!" she answered a little bitterly.

"What have I got to be jealous about?" said Kit carelessly. "What's the girl to me, silly little fool! It's you who should be jealous, Janet; it's your lover she is flirting with."

"It is not Violet's fault," answered Janet, quietly folding up her work. "You should not call her a flirt; she is really a good-hearted little thing, and she cannot help being pretty. Of course, you men all admire her; it is very natural," and Janet shut up her workbox, and left the room with a strange little smile on her face.

Left alone, Kit Barrington stalked across the room to the fly makers.

"You seem delightfully busy, Lennard!"

David Lennard drew himself up with a start, and blushed like a schoolboy.

"Oh, it's Miss Clayton who is so kind—so good as to help me," he said confusedly.

"Would you like to help us?" said Violet, looking up at him the picture of innocence.

"No, thank you, you don't seem to want help; two is company and three none, you know, Miss Clayton."

"I quite agree with you," she answered very decidedly.

Kit Barrington's face got very dark; he made her a bow and walked quickly to the door.

"I am sorry to have interrupted such a pleasant *tête-à-tête*," he said angrily, as he left the room.

"What is he angry about?" asked David of Violet.

She laughed a soft laugh which died away into a gentle little sigh.

"I don't know how it is," she said, putting her head on one side sadly; "but no one likes me."

"No one likes you!" cried David, "how can you say so; you, the most charming, the most delightful, the most—why you are a sort of goddess, and we are all ordinary mortals who worship you!"

"Ah, Mr. Lennard, you are very good to say such pretty things to me!" she answered, with another of those little laughs below her breath which were like the sound of ripples on a summer sea. "It is very kind of you to pay me such pretty compliments, but I am afraid it's only your politeness."

"Politeness, by Jove!" exclaimed the young man. "I wish you knew how much politeness there is in it; I wish I could tell you what I really think of you," and he bit his lip and began pacing up and down the room.

"Pray don't!" said Violet, laughing; "you might say something very unkind."

"Unkind!" exclaimed David Lennard, stopping short and standing over her in the greatest state of agitation; and just at that moment Mrs. Barrington's voice was heard calling along the passage—

"Violet! Violet! where are you?"

Violet jumped up, and the salmon flies fell out of her lap all over the floor, whilst David Lennard threw open the French window and fled into the garden in the rain.

Meanwhile Kit Barrington was in the billiard-room knocking the balls savagely up and down in no very enviable frame of mind. He could not make Violet out at all; she did not seem to him the same girl as the sweet heroine of his travelling adventure between Stafford and Carlisle. It is probable that had she continued as smiling and encouraging as she had been to him on that eventful journey, man-like, he would not have cared much more about her. For the smiles and blushes of fair women were an incense to which he was tolerably well accustomed. But her coldness, her indifference, her little flashes of temper, and, above all, her flirtation, for such it seemed to him with David Lennard, had piqued him, till from a mere passing caprice his fancy for her had grown into a most serious and absorbing passion. He was a man who prided himself on his knowledge of women and their ways, and yet here was a girl whom he could in no manner understand. She baffled him completely! Was she simply a flirt trying in wanton mischief to attract the attention of every man she met? or had Mrs. Barrington drawn such an unpleasant picture of himself and his sins that she was virtuously resolved to have nothing more to do with him? or did she really at heart like him, and was she simply resorting to the well-worn expedient of fixing his fancy by rousing his jealousy?

Kit was inclined to believe in the latter alternative. It certainly never struck him that she was

trying with all her might not to like him, because, forsooth, he was poor! My heroine had not wasted her morning; she had driven one lover to the verge of distraction, and she had led on the other to a distinct admission of his allegiance to her. On the whole, Violet was satisfied with herself. She had now set before herself distinctly the task of capturing David Lennard. In this she had no scruples whatever. She did not think that he and Janet cared for each other much, and she felt perfectly certain that she could make a better use of his wealth than Janet would do; at all events she stood more in need of it. "All is fair in love and war." Violet quoted the old adage to herself, and adopted it as her battle-cry. And she liked her victim very well on the whole. He was good tempered and generous, and in spite of all that bound him to Janet, was fast falling more and more into her power. Of course it would have been nicer had it been Kit, but—and she sighed to herself as she reflected that it was no use wishing for impossibilities, and that one can't have everything in this world!

In the afternoon of that day the weather somewhat cleared, and it was put to the vote and decided that the whole party should go out for a walk. Every one accordingly assembled in the hall. Violet was last. Mrs. Barrington, well covered up in a waterproof cloak, began to get impatient.

"Come, come! when is that child coming down? how long she is!"

"I called out to her as I passed her room, and she said she was just ready," said Janet, who was also in a waterproof cloak and goloshes!

"Are you all waiting for me?" cried a clear young voice from above, and everybody looked up.

Violet stood at the top of the stairs. She had put on the same serge dress in which Kit had first met her, which fitted her slight figure to perfection. A little black felt hat was perched coquettishly on her small head; her feet were cased in the daintiest and trimmest of balmoral boots, and stepped slowly out one after the other as she came lingeringly down stairs, buttoning her little grey glove as she came. She knew perfectly well that they were all looking up at her, and admiring her, so she did not hurry herself in the least, but when she got to the last step she looked round at them all with the most innocent and unconscious little smile, as if to say, "What can you all be looking at me for?"

"What a pretty hat, Miss Clayton," said Major Willet.

"Do you think so? Oh! I don't care for it much. I should so like a blackcock's tail for it."

"I will get you one to-morrow; a wish of yours is of course a command," said the gallant Major as confidently as if blackcock's tails grew on the blackberry bushes.

"And I, too, will do all I can to get you one," said David Lennard eagerly; and she nodded and smiled at him as much as to say, "I know you will."

They all started off, the men clustering round Violet, who looked like a little queen among her courtiers, smiling at them all impartially, and dispensing her favours like a sweet beneficent fairy upon all alike. And yet what a deal of mischief she was working. They could not, of course, all walk beside her, though there is no doubt they

all wished to do so. Under these circumstances I have noticed that older men are seldom willing to give up to the younger ones. Mr. Barrington and Major Willet stuck to Violet with pertinacity, and she found herself, somewhat to her disgust, walking between them; Lennard could not tear himself away from her neighbourhood, and walked the other side of the Major, and talked across him as well as he could, whilst Kit was reduced to following in the rear between Mrs. Barrington and Janet. Whatever Violet may privately have thought of these arrangements she was far too wise to show. She slipped her arm through Mr. Barrington's with friendly intimacy; she called him "Godpapa," and said it was altogether delightful to be walking with him.

"How charming to get you next me; how nice to have a little chat together," she whispered, looking up into his face with a delicious little smile, and gently pressing her hand upon his arm.

"You little flatterer!" said her host, but he liked it nevertheless.

To have the prettiest woman present hanging on your arm and looking up with bewitching smiles and tender little speeches into your face, cannot but be very gratifying to any man—especially is it gratifying to a married man on the shady side of fifty, with a good sprinkling of grey on his head.

Married men come in for a good deal of this, what might be termed spurious attention. To begin with, they are very safe; they will tell no tales either to other men, nor even, if they are wise, to their own wives; and then they are very good for practising purposes, things can be said to them that could not be ventured upon to a bachelor; little confidences can be made, pretty little speeches, whispered half in fun and half in earnest, to which the married man, ignoring as far as possible the existence of the possibly unpoetical and portly wife of his bosom, may, if he feel so disposed, respond with an amount of sentimental tenderness which will be sure to be most flatteringly and encouragingly received. The married man, therefore, has his own peculiar uses and privileges in the social economy of the world.

All this Violet, who took to the ways of the world like a duckling to the water, understood by instinct most thoroughly. Moreover, in this instance, the married man was her host; and when people like their quarters, and wish to remain in them, they must be careful to cultivate their host.

Meanwhile, through all her pretty chatter to Mr. Barrington, she never forgot for one instant that his nephew was walking behind her. Kit, what between his admiration of her pretty bright hair and graceful figure, and his disgust at the glances she managed to throw pretty often at David Lennard across the Major, was driven half frantic. More than half the length of the walk Violet kept persistently hold of Mr. Barrington's only too-willing arm, and then she began to think she had sacrificed herself long enough on the shrine of duty. There was a piece of broken ground over which the party had to scramble, along the side of the moor; she took advantage of it to accept Mr. Lennard's assistance, and finally, to walk on in front with him. They quickened their steps a little until they were well in advance of the others,

and then from commonplaces they gradually began to talk of more interesting and personal things. David Lennard alluded to her having said in the morning that no one liked her.

"I can't think what can have put such an idea into your head," he said.

"Ah! you don't know what a sad life I have had," said Violet, looking up at him with the most sorrowful eyes.

"You! Miss Clayton? I should have thought your life must have been all sunshine, like yourself."

"Ah, no. I have good spirits, fortunately, or else I don't know what would have become of me. I have such an unhappy home, you know—I have lost my mother," she said, with such a quiver in her voice that David Lennard thought she must have only just put off her mourning. Being a soft-hearted young fellow, and having himself known what it was to have a good mother and to lose her, he felt quite unhappy for her.

"I am so sorry for you," he said, in a sympathizing whisper.

"Thank you. And then, Mr. Lennard, my father—of course he is my father, and I would not say so to any one but you; but you are so kind to me that I can't help confiding in you. My poor father is so strange, so unsympathizing, poor man. It is not his fault; but he is most trying to live with, and he does not, of course, care for me at all."

"Indeed! how very sad," said David, who from this mysterious speech began to perceive that Mr. Clayton must be an imbecile dotard, probably suffering from softening of the brain. He was quite afraid to pursue the subject any further for fear of wounding her.

"I can really feel for you," he hastened to say, "for my home is a sad one. I am an orphan, too Miss Clayton, so we have that in common."

"Ah, but you have Janet!" said Violet, with a quick covert glance at him.

"Janet?" and he paused in some confusion. "I don't think I have had much affection from Janet," he said rather hurriedly. "Perhaps some day you will see—you will find out—what a mistake it has all been. I suppose it is my doom, you know; but it's rather hard on a fellow to have these things all settled for him—there's a sort of fate in it, I suppose, and one has got to submit."

"Violet, Violet! Stop! how fast you are going," cried Mrs. Barrington's voice behind them, and they both stopped and turned round facing the rest of the party, who came struggling up the hill behind them. But before they came within hearing, Violet looked up into her companion's face and said:—

"A man has no business to talk of fate, his fate is what he chooses to make it himself; and if a thing is unjust and wrong he ought not to submit to it, he should think of himself, and—and——"

Here she became engrossed in digging up a daisy root with the end of her umbrella—

"And—of others."

The last word was but a whisper, but David Lennard heard it, and it had the effect of setting every pulse in his body tingling and throbbing at a terrific pace. He made no answer, and the rest of the party joined them.

(To be continued.)

A REASONING MONKEY.

BY J. MCGREGOR ALLAN.

WHY not? The title will surprise none but those who still think it possible to draw a distinct line between instinct and reason. Dr. Robert Chambers has pointed out that the difference between mind in lower animals and in man, is in degree only, not specific. All faculties are instinctive. But in animals the faculty is *definite*; in man, *indefinite* in its range of action. Such he thinks the real nature of the distinction between what are called instinct and reason, upon which so many volumes have been written without profit to the world.—*Vestiges*. 12th edition, p. 382. The Darwinian theory has roused a strong prejudice against the monkey. We are as shy of him as rich men of poor relations. People gladly read comparisons between dog and monkey, to the prejudice of the latter. It is commonly believed that dogs have more intelligence than monkeys. We have no data to come to any such conclusion, and cannot have, until we domesticate monkeys like dogs. In Europe, we observe apes and monkeys under very unfavourable conditions. We ought to make friends with, and study them at home in their native haunts. This was actually done by an old traveller, M. Le Vaillant. Those who have never read, or who have forgotten, his *African Travels*, will be interested in the following summarized account of—

THE MONKEY FRIEND.

"An animal that rendered me essential services by its useful presence, dissipated disagreeable reflections by its simple and striking instinct, seemed to anticipate my efforts, and even comforted me in languor, was an ape." Strictly speaking, this animal was not an ape, but a baboon-monkey. Scientifically, the word ape is restricted to the four man-like, tailless quadrumana—African Chimpanzee and Gorilla; Asiatic Gibbon and Orang. "Extremely familiar and attached to me, I made it my taster. We never touched any fruit or roots unknown to my Hottentots, until my dear Kees had first tasted them. If he refused them, we judged them disagreeable or dangerous, and threw them away. An ape has one peculiarity which distinguishes it from all other animals, and brings it very near man. It has an equal share of greed and curiosity; though destitute of appetite, it tastes without necessity every kind of food offered to it; and always lays its paw on everything within reach. Another quality in Kees I valued still more. He was my best guardian; and by night or day, instantly awoke at the least sign of danger. By his cries and other expressions of fear, we were always informed of an enemy's approach before my dogs could discover it. They were so accustomed to his voice, that they slept in perfect security, and never went the rounds, on which account I was extremely angry, fearing that I should no longer find that indispensable assistance which I had a right to expect, if any disorder or fatal accident should deprive me of my faithful guardian. However, when he had once given the alarm, they all stopped to watch the signal, and on the least motion of his eyes or shaking of his head, I have seen them all rush forwards, and scamper away in that quarter to which they observed his looks directed." An

awkward fact for those who so complacently assume the superior intelligence of the dog! Le Vaillant, his Hottentots, and his dogs all dependent for guardianship, during the night, upon the vigilance and sagacity of one individual of that species so depreciated and derided—the poor despised monkey!

MONKEY CUNNING.

"Kees climbed trees for gum and honey. When he found neither, he searched for roots, and ate them with much relish, especially a particular species, which I found excellent, and greatly wished to partake of. Kees was very cunning. When he found any of this root, if I was not near to claim my part, he made great haste to devour it, his eyes all the time directed towards me. By the distance I had to go before I could approach him, he judged of the time he had to eat it alone, and I, indeed, arrived too late. Sometimes, however, when deceived in his calculations, I came on him sooner than he expected, he instantly endeavoured to conceal the morsels; but, by a well-applied blow, I obliged him to restore the theft; and in my turn, becoming master of the envied prey, he was obliged to receive laws from the stronger party. Kees entertained no hatred or rancour; and I easily made him comprehend how detestable was that base selfishness of which he had set me an example." Whence it appears that Kees could not only reason, but was far more docile than many human beings. "To tear up these roots, he laid hold of the tuft of leaves with his teeth, and pressing his fore-paws firmly against the earth, and drawing his head backwards, the root generally followed. When this method did not succeed, he seized the tuft as before, as close to the earth as he could, then throwing his heels over his head, the root always yielded to the jerk he gave it." Was this the action of an "unconscious automaton," or of a reasoning being?

THE MONKEY RIDER.

Buffon observes that man alone utilizes other animals to his service, which he attributes to the sole possession of the reasoning faculty. He adds that there is among animals no mark of this subordination, no appearance that any one of them knows or feels the superiority of its nature over that of the rest. — *Natural History of Man*. This general rule has some remarkable exceptions. Ants go to war, enslave, and make prisoners. Our reasoning monkey, without any teaching, used actually to press the dogs into his service! "When tired, he got on the back of one of my dogs, which had the complaisance to carry him for hours. One only larger and stronger than the rest ought to have served for this purpose, but the cunning animal well knew how to avoid this drudgery. The moment he perceived Kees on his shoulders, he remained motionless, and suffered the caravan to pass on without ever stirring from the spot. The timorous Kees still persisted, but as soon as he began to lose sight of us he was obliged to dismount, and he and the dog ran with all their might to overtake us. For fear of being surprised, the dog dexterously suffered him to get before him, and watched him with great attention. He had acquired ascendancy ever my whole pack, for which he was indebted to superiority of instinct; for among animals, as among men, address often gets the better of strength. At his meals Kees could not endure guests. If any of the dogs

approached too near at that time, he gave them a hearty blow, which these poltroons never returned, but scampered away as fast as they could."

DREAD OF OTHER MONKEYS.

"I could not account for it, that, next to the serpent, the animal he most dreaded was one of his own species:—whether sensible that being tamed had deprived him of great part of his faculties, and that fear had got possession of his senses; or he was jealous, and dreaded a rival in my friendship. It would have been easy to catch wild ones and to tame them; but I never thought of it. I had given Kees a place in my heart, which no other after him could occupy; and I sufficiently testified how far he might depend on my constancy. Sometimes he heard others of the same species making a noise in the mountains; and, notwithstanding his terror, he thought proper, I know not why, to reply to them. When they heard his voice, they approached; but as soon as he perceived them he fled with horrible cries, and running between our legs, implored the protection of everybody, while his limbs quivered through fear. We found it no easy matter to calm him, but he gradually recovered his natural tranquillity." A remarkable illustration of the power of acquired habit over natural instinct! Kees actually preferred human to simian society, and appears to have dreaded lest the latter might injure or carry him away. He had one human propensity which, exhibited in the possessor of £300 per annum, is called Kleptomania, but in the Poor is named

THEFT.

"A fault, common to all domestic animals, but in Kees it was disguised into a talent, the ingenious effects of which I admired. Notwithstanding all the correction bestowed on him by my people, who took the matter seriously, he was never amended. He knew perfectly well how to untie the ropes of a basket, to take provisions from it; and, above all, milk, of which he was remarkably fond: more than once he had made me go without any. I often beat him pretty severely myself; but when he escaped from me, he did not appear at my tent till towards night."

TOO FOND OF HIS GLASS.

"Reared like a child of the family, I had almost spoiled him, for I never ate or drank anything without allowing him part. If I sometimes happened to forget him, as he was a sworn enemy to my absence of mind, he took great care to rouse me from my reveries by patting my hand, or smacking his lips." [Like a dumb child.] "He was remarkably gluttonous; his temperament led him to extremes; for he was equally fond of milk and strong liquors." [Some people like them mixed.] "I never gave him any of the latter but in a plate, as I observed that every time he drank it from a glass, his precipitation made him take as much by the nose as by the mouth, so that he coughed and sneezed for hours."

HOW HE BECAME A TEETOTALLER.

"He was then on the ground close by me, waiting till his allowance should be served to him, and following with his eyes, the bottle passing round. With what impatience did he wait for his turn! How strongly did he express by motions

and looks, that he feared the cruel bottle would be emptied too soon, and would not reach him." ["Man being reasonable, must get drunk," writes Byron. So that a fondness for intoxicating liquor characterizes other animals besides *rational* man.] "Alas! the unfortunate animal, licking his lips by anticipation, little knew he was going to taste it for the last time. His allowance had just been poured into the plate, and while he was preparing to taste it, I lighted a slip of paper, which I imperceptibly conveyed underneath him. The brandy instantly caught fire. Kees sent forth a shrill cry and leaped ten paces from me. I tried to recall him by offering a thousand caresses; but, following the dictates of his passion, he immediately disappeared and retired to rest. After this terrible fear, all means to make Kees forget and to bring him back to his favourite liquor were fruitless. He never would taste a drop; he seemed to have conceived an implacable aversion to it. When any of my people showed him the bottle, he muttered between his teeth, and sometimes, when within his reach, he would give it a blow, and instantly climbing a tree there, show his displeasure in perfect security."

HOW HE SHOWED CONSCIOUSNESS OF A FAULT.

"Everything was ready for dinner. I was dressing on a plate some dry haricots I had just fried, when I heard the voice of a bird with which I was not at all acquainted. I snatched up my fuses and hurried from my tent. In half-an-hour I returned, bird in hand, but I was much surprised not to find a single bean on my table. This was a trick of Kees. I had corrected him pretty severely the evening before, for robbing me of my supper, and I did not imagine he would so soon have forgotten his punishment, as to be guilty of this new fault almost immediately after it. He had disappeared; but as he always waited for the return of night, when he had committed any error, before he again made his appearance, I well knew he could not escape me. Generally when drinking tea, he glided in and took his station near me, in his accustomed place, with an air of innocence, as if nothing had happened. That evening he did not appear, and next morning I began to be very uneasy, and apprehensive that he had deserted me entirely. This loss would have been the more distressing, as, besides the amusement he afforded me, he was really of great utility, and rendered me such services that his place could not have been supplied by another. On the third day, one of my people assured me he had seen him in the neighbourhood; but that he had hidden himself as soon as he found that he was discovered. I searched the whole neighbourhood with my dogs. Of a sudden, hearing a cry like that he used to send forth when I returned from hunting, and would not carry him along with me, I stopped; and casting my eyes everywhere around, I at length perceived him, half concealed, in the middle of a tree. I called him and coaxed him to descend and come to me, but as he seemed not inclined to trust to these marks of friendship and joy, I was under the necessity of climbing the tree. He suffered me to lay hold of him; while fear and pleasure were alternately painted in his eyes, and expressed in his gestures. I returned to camp, where he seemed to wait for his fate; I thought at first I ought to tie him up, but by this I should have been

deprived of his amusing tricks. I resolved to show generosity, and not treat him with severity. A second correction would not have altered his disposition, and he had perhaps more than once received it very improperly, for his reputation, which gave probability to every accusation against him, hurt him very much in my opinion, and rendered me unjust, especially when in bad humour. Several petty thefts, which a fondness for dainties caused my Hottentots to commit, were often laid on him; and poor Kees was many times blamed without cause."

VALUE OF ANIMAL INSTINCT.

"Water now grew more scarce, and I began to entertain very serious apprehensions. One day I perceived Kees stop all of a sudden, turn his face and nose towards the wind, and begin to run, with all my dogs after him, none of which made the least noise. Astonished at this new spectacle, and perceiving nothing that could attract them, I made haste to come up with them; but what was my surprise when I found them collected round a beautiful spring, three hundred paces from the place whence they had set out. On this discovery, having made a sign to my people with my hand to approach, they instantly obeyed, and we encamped close to this beneficent spring, which immediately assumed the name of the magician that discovered it. I shall more than once have occasion to recollect circumstances, in which I received signal services from animals I had along with me; and on this occasion they freed me from a dreadful affliction under which I must have sunk, without their assistance."

Well might Le Vaillant call the spring Kees Fountain, to express his gratitude to the discoverer. Possibly the European traveller and his Hottentots owed their lives to the instinct of the monkey.

"I never doubted that man received from his Creator the same faculties in an equal proportion, but his corruption has insensibly deprived him of them all. Savages approaching nearer to Nature, in proportion as they are removed from us, have likewise every sense more acute; and I myself, after five or six months in the deserts, when, following their example, I turned my face from one side to the other, was at length able, like them, to discover a river or a pond, and we never failed to find them."

The sense is somewhat ambiguous. Does he mean that he was enabled, like the Hottentots, to discover water by the sight, or by the smell? The former only requires keen eye-sight, and experience of the desert. But pure water has no smell. Possibly some aromatic herbs, or vegetation more rank and strong-scented in the neighbourhood of water, appealed to the stronger olfactory sense of the animal. From whatever cause, the life sustaining stream, which remained hidden to man, was discovered by the monkey.

THE MONKEY NATURALIST.

The author had shot four monkeys. "When examining these animals, Kees entered my tent, and I imagined he was about to vent loud cries, but it appeared that he was not so much afraid of them when dead, as alive. He considered them, one after another, and turned them over several times in all directions, to examine them in the same

manner as he had seen me. He was not, I believe, the first monkey who wished to set up for a naturalist; but he was strongly impelled by a secret motive much less generous than that of acquiring knowledge. By feeling the cheeks of the deceased, he had discovered some treasures; for I soon saw him venture to open their mouths, plunder their pouches of the almonds they had plucked, and consign them to his own."

OMNIVOROUS.

Another and concluding peculiarity of Kees, was that he closely resembled man in being omnivorous. This was not the effect of his education at the table of Le Vaillant. Naturally Kees possessed a most accommodating palate. Nothing seems to have come amiss to him. He did not restrict himself to his natural diet of fruits and roots, but ate impartially of most living things that fell in his way. He ate with pleasure the prickles of the mimosa, and induced Le Vaillant to try them. But here his monkey-taster seems to have deceived him. For he found the taste of garlic so strong that he was obliged to spit them out again. The seeds of this tree, which Kees seemed to prefer, produced the same effect on his palate. Once Kees had a treat of locusts, which approached in a cloud, to the general joy of the natives. "The locusts were so numerous that they darkened the air; they did not, however, rise very high, and formed a column about three thousand feet in length. Three hours elapsed before they had passed us. This swarm was so close, that several, stifled or hurt by being dashed against the rest, fell down like hail, while Kees, who collected them, feasted on them with much pleasure." They arrived at a fountain of water so brackish, that the Hottentots who drank, were seized with colics and diarrhoea. Kees, too sagacious to drink the water, was experimenting after his own fashion, as well as his master.

"As I was sounding the soil, and examining whether this water might not cause disorders still more dangerous, I was greatly surprised to observe Kees, always the first everywhere, draw from the vessel a crab about three or four inches in diameter. This circumstance was indeed most astonishing, as the fountain was surrounded by solid rock, and had no apparent outlet whatever. My ape seemed to eat his crab with so much pleasure, that I ordered thirty of them to be caught, and when roasted, I found them excellent."

Gentle reader, to whom these extracts may be new, suppose I had carefully concealed what Kees was? Would you not have thought such evidences of intelligence exhibited by some very clever human being? If so, you will conclude with me, that Kees was "A REASONING MONKEY."

THE LOVER'S PLEA.

I.

THEY tell me you've lovers in plenty,
A motley, but worshipping band,
All ages—from sixty to twenty,
And quite the *élite* of the land.
Bishop, a Poet, a "Heavy,"
A popular Tory M. P.,
At "kettledrum," "picnic," or "levée,"
Surround you with flexible knee,

II.

My search for an idol was ended
When, bright as a star, *you* "came out,"
And, since, I have madly attended
The soirée, the ball, and the rout,—
Though I'm not the most graceful of dancers,
Compared with such butterfly-youth
As Lambkin, or Trot of the Prancers,
Or Lord Hoop de Dooden, in truth.

III.

But ah! when you wanted some supper,
Those capering noodles were gone,
And you were, at last, in the Upper
Long suite of apartments—alone:
I hunted up chicken and curry,
And fought through a multitude twice
(Which gave little heed to my hurry)
To get you some strawberry ice.

IV.

In the travesty "Grandma's Goloshes"
I sacrificed all for a place—
My hair, and my curling moustaches,
And powdered and raddled my face.
As your mother's mamma it was fitting
For me to demand an embrace,
But I noticed you oftener flitting
To him of the scarlet and lace.

V.

I cannot describe like an Ensign,
The deeds to which Mars can inspire;
Or scribble a sonnet, and then sign
My name as "The Man of the Lyre."
I cannot discourse jurisdiction,
Compared with a blue-book M.P.;
Or hint at, in elegant fiction,
The synodal charms of a see.

VI.

Of the wit or the wisdom of fashion
I have not a millionth part;
But only a long-cherish'd passion
Which lingers deep down in my heart.
My name is unsullied—no canker
Would lurk in "the orange;" and—too,
There's a nice little sum with my banker,
So tell me, dear love—Shall I do?

DRUID GRAYL.

A MATCH MAKER.

BY ANNETTE CALTHROP.

"PUT down that everlasting book—do, child," said an old woman's voice—a voice in which was a distinct shade of irritability. "You are reading, reading, reading, morning, noon, and night. The pony will be starting for the station in ten minutes, and you won't be ready to drive."

A stifled exclamation, which sounded suspiciously like "bother," came from a corner near a window, through which a number of Gloire de Dijon roses were thrusting their yellow heads. A young girl closed, with an angry snap, a formidable looking volume, which lay on her knee; she jumped from a window seat, and pushed back on her forehead a mass of loose hair, which had fallen into her eyes. Her slender form looked very pretty and graceful, as it stood out against the light, in the half-darkened room—a cool, spacious, country drawing-room, with cumbersome furniture—

swathed, for the most part, in faded chintz, with a high, old-fashioned piano, with a profusion of small tables, old china, and knick-knacks, and with a pervading scent of dried rose leaves.

"Am I to go with the carriage, granny?" the girl asked, in rather a woful voice.

The first speaker—an old lady, with an unbent figure, and a bright keen face, who sat knitting in a distant corner of the room—looked up impatiently from under her spectacles. "Are you to go? To be sure! Why not?"

The answer was not quite so prompt, as the question had been.

"I'm—I'm not used to driving, you know, granny, and—"

"Stuff and nonsense! Gipsy doesn't need any driving; he'll go to the station of his own accord, if you only let him. And I am anxious that you should meet Cousin Tom, and make his acquaintance at once."

"I don't want to make his acquaintance," was the comment which rose to the girl's lips, but timely wisdom checked its utterance. When, within a few minutes, the prophesied arrival of a pony carriage before the hall door took place, the charioteer was equipped and waiting. She stood in a jessamine covered porch of a substantial, ugly red brick house, overlooking a large garden, with trimly kept lawns, and clumps of dark yews; beyond was a stretch of monotonous fenland.

"Give my love to Tom, Lettice," called the old lady, through an open window.

"Very well, Granny." The girl took the reins from a groom, half dubiously, in unpractised hand. In another moment, Gipsy started off, regulating his own pace; he trotted down a drive, bordered, on each side, by tall shrubs, passed through an open gate, by a sunk fence, crossed a small park, left behind him another gate and a lodge, and turned into a long, straight dusty road, leading to the village and railway station of Dolethorpe. Lettice sat bolt upright, a frown upon her face; she disliked her responsible occupation, and she dreaded an encounter, which awaited her, at its close. A crisis in her life was arriving, and she recognized and resented the fact.

Lettice Delbridge was the only child of a certain Geoffrey Delbridge, a dabbler in literature, and the fine arts—a clever, handsome, idle, *ne'er do weel*. Geoffrey's wife belonged to a rich Lincolnshire county family, who took umbrage at her marriage. Mrs. Delbridge's married life was a short one; she died when her daughter was eight years old. From that time, to the opening of the present year, Lettice had shared her father's wandering life; she had a cursory acquaintance with the fashionable haunts, and an ampler knowledge of the shabbiest quarters of most continental capitals. The girl had considerable taste and considerable talent, but her energies—artistic and intellectual—had not been placed under wise direction. For poetry, she had a very genuine love, but she had fallen in with a number of would-be poets and poetesses, who cultivated affectation as a fine art, and who taught her to talk affectedly on the theme of poetical emotion.

Lettice Delbridge was a slight fair girl, with a pale, studious face, a sensitive mouth, and dreamy grey eyes. Her face was too thin, and her features were too sharp for actual prettiness; but there were fascinating depths in her grey eyes;

and her personality was not devoid of a subtle indefinable charm, which to some natures is more potent than that of physical beauty.

A few months before our story opens, Lettice's father had died; in her orphanhood, her mother's family, who had hitherto ignored her existence, came forward to her aid; and her grandmother, Mrs. Vincent, who was a widow and lived alone, deigned to offer a home. Lettice had now been established for some months at the Dolethorpe Manor House, her grandmother's place in Lincolnshire. She found her new quarters intolerably dull. She had enjoyed her old semi-Bohemian life—had enjoyed the fraternal society of struggling authors, of actors, of rising artists, of singers and musicians, with their tales of pecuniary difficulties, of rebuffs and rebounds, of high hopes and dire fears, and of an all-sustaining ambition. Now, the prim, placid life, to which she was introduced, in a lonely house among the fens, and the hum-drum society of Mrs. Vincent's prosy neighbours, proved irksome in the extreme. Then, too, Lettice disliked country pursuits and amusements. Tennis was a weariness to her. It was not without apprehension of disaster that she had learned to drive Mrs. Vincent in a pony carriage drawn by the stadiest of ponies; and riding was an accomplishment far beyond her range. Her chief interest centred round the nearest circulating library—a poor little establishment in a sleepy town four miles distant.

Mrs. Vincent, having once given her granddaughter the shelter of her roof, interested herself not a little in her welfare. She took the girl's future into her hands, and, within her own mind, she planned for Lettice what she considered a suitable marriage. Substantial pecuniary advantages were to follow Lettice's compliance with her grandmother's designs. But these designs excited a tumult of suppressed opposition. Lettice told herself that she would never relinquish, in matters matrimonial, her right of free choice. As for the husband selected for her, she had not yet seen him, but she hated him viciously in advance. Mingled with her feelings of hatred came, sometimes, the remembrance of a certain evening on a Venetian balcony, and of a certain voice, which had talked to her of poetry and art, of sweetness and light, and of the beauty of communion between two kindred souls.

Misgivings concerning the future, and wistful recollections of the past gave a displeased, not to say a cross, look to Lettice's face, as she drove along, or rather, as she held a slack rein, and trusted herself to the pony's guidance.

It was sultry weather. The scenery was unpicturesque and uninteresting. On each side of the road was a weedy ditch; beyond stretched an expanse of flat land, parcelled out into meadow and fallows, and turnips, and wheat and oats.

Presently Lettice saw a dark figure advancing towards her; it came nearer and proved to be that of an acquaintance—a fair, youthful, narrow-shouldered, weak-eyed curate, an admirer of her own. The young man wore a very long, ultra-clerical coat, and a very broad brimmed ultra-clerical hat; an eye-glass, attached by a ribbon round his neck, had made its way to the centre of his back; he carried an umbrella and a little bundle of tracts; he was shod with a pair of thick soled, country-made boots,

The clergyman doffed his hat eagerly and pulled up in mid-course, apparently intent on the interchange of verbal courtesies. But the girl passed by with a formal little bow, and left him standing at the roadside, looking after her through a little cloud of dust.

The train which Lettice was to meet was late; she had some time to wait at the small, dull, little frequented station. She pulled the pony into a patch of shade cast by some of the railway buildings, drew a book from under one of the cushions of the carriage and began to read. The book was Spenser's *Faerie Queens*. Soon the reader forgot the heat, forgot the annoyances and the ennui of her life, forgot the unknown cousin whom she had come to meet, forgot everything and every one, except the Faery Knights—the virtues militant—who served Gloriana—Glory, in the highest, deepest, truest meaning of the word. She read of the Red Cross Knight who, when parted from Una, and fainting in the "middest of the race," saw coming to his rescue Prince Arthur with the wondrous shield. A look of awe came into her face; she was familiar with Professor Morley's review of the *Faerie Queens*, familiar too with another writer's *Teaching of Books*; and she knew the allegorical meaning of Prince Arthur in the poem, as in the hour of deepest human need, he advanced—the bearer of the shield of the grace of God.

Meanwhile, Lettice's unknown cousin was thinking of her as he pulled away at a pipe in a first-class carriage of a train speeding towards Doletorpe; a copy of *Bell's Life* lay disregarded at his feet. It was difficult to him to picture a young visitor among his old haunts. He often came to the Manor House; he lived within easy distance in another division of Lincolnshire, and he was Mrs. Vincent's favourite grandson.

At last the train steamed into the station; Tom Vincent soon discovered Gipsy's whereabouts. "You must be cousin Lettice," he said pleasantly, as he lifted his hat to the occupant of the carriage.

"Yes, I am Lettice Delbridge," the girl answered stiffly, and she stowed away, with a sigh, the *Faerie Queens* beneath the cushions. "Granny sent me to meet you," she added, in a designedly ungracious tone, which was intended to convey to her hearer's intelligence the fact that the journey had not been voluntarily undertaken. She lifted her eyes to the new comer.

Tom was a tall, broad manly fellow, of some three or four and twenty years of age, with brown, crisply curling hair, a sunburnt face, frank, honest, blue eyes, a straight nose, a fair moustache, and a large mouth, whose lips were parted in a good humoured smile.

"He's decidedly handsome, but he's not my style," was Lettice's mental comment on the object of her scrutiny.

Before her mind's eye there arose a face and figure after another type—a stooping figure and a pale face, with a background of lank black hair—the face and figure belonging to the voice which had talked so glibly on the Venetian balcony of sweetness and light, and of the beauty of communion between two kindred souls.

"She has a fetching little pale face of her own—though she has put on black looks for me—but she is not my style," said Tom to himself.

Before his mental vision came a laughing face, with a brilliant colour, and a pair of merry dark eyes—the face of a young lady of his acquaintance, the best tennis player, the most tireless dancer, and the straightest rider after hounds in her county.

"Wouldn't you like to drive?" asked Tom, as Lettice moved aside to give him her place, while a porter adjusted a portmanteau at the back of the carriage.

"Oh, dear no, thank you;" very shortly. "I am only too glad to escape the trouble."

Crack went the whip; the reins were gathered in a tight, vigorous grasp, and Gipsy—knowing well the hand that held him—set off at a pace regulated, this time, by his driver and not by himself.

At last Tom pulled into a walk.

"I say, cousin Lettice!" he began suddenly, looking down on the little face beside him.

"Well?"

Tom laughed awkwardly. He tugged his moustache, in some embarrassment, how to proceed. But his outspoken nature was not to be baffled by embarrassing circumstances.

"Look here," he said, "if you and I are to be friends—and there's no reason why we shouldn't be—we must understand one another at starting. As matters stand, I have a shrewd suspicion that you intend to dislike me cordially; and that's hard lines on me, you know. No doubt Granny has told you—as she has told me—that she has set her mind on a match between us too."

Lettice could not answer for indignation. How dared this cousin of hers subject her to the humiliation of a reminder that the disposal of her hand had ever been represented as a matter out of her own control!

"Naturally, you are angry with Granny. She hasn't a ghost of a right to dictate to you about your future, to say nothing"—with a comical smile—"about my own."

"Really, I don't think that we need discuss—"

"Oh, yes, excuse me, we had better discuss the point, this once, and then dismiss it from our minds for good. I want just to tell you that I hope you won't let this scheme of granny's interfere with our chance of friendship for one another. We are consins, after all, and it will be awfully jolly, for me, at least, to have a companion in the dull old place. At all events, I can set your mind at ease on one point. I haven't any matrimonial designs upon you—I haven't upon my word—and there's no fear of my misconstruing any sign of friendliness on your part into—into—encouragement, you know. To tell the truth"—Tom hesitated—"I have some thought of marrying sometime in the vague—ever so vague—future; and there's some one in my head, whom I hope, one day, to make my wife."

Lettice thawed visibly. "I am glad to hear that; perhaps, to use your own expression, there's some one in my head too," she said, with quite an affable little laugh.

"Is there, now? Well, cousin Lettice, shall we try to be friends?"

"With all my heart," she answered cordially now.

"That's fine; only that I'm a bit afraid that you won't find my tastes like your own."

"What do you know of my tastes?" with an amused smile.

"Well, you dress æsthetically, and—and—you were reading poetry when I first saw you. I have a fancy that you are clever and artistic, and literary—and—and all that. And I!—I am stupid as an owl."

"Oh, I dare say that you are not," with serene condescension.

"Yes, I am," he said despondently. "I'm hopelessly stupid, so far as books are concerned. But," he added, brightening, "books ain't everything, after all, are they?"

"Not quite everything."

"Before I leave—there's no hurry about the matter—I'll tell granny that there's no hope of a marriage between us, and that all blame in the affair is mine."

"No, no; we'll share the blame."

Tom smiled a lenient smile of superior wisdom. "Silly child!" he said loftily, in the tone of one qualified, in point of years, to give grandfatherly counsel. "Don't you know that granny has heaps of tin, and that if you vex her she may leave every penny away from you. As for my ruining my own chance, that isn't of so much consequence. My governor is well off, and I shan't do badly, independently of granny. But even if I were ever so poor, it would be horribly mean in me to stand in your light. I am a man, and can make my own way in the world."

"You are very generous, cousin Tom," with a sudden impulse of admiration. "But you needn't trouble about me. I don't care a rap for granny's money. When I lived with father, we were always poor, and I was a thousand times happier than I am under granny's prosperous roof. I'll take the whole blame, unless you consent to share it. I'll tell granny that you proposed to me and that I refused you."

"What a *stunning* little thing it is!" murmured Tom to himself. "Well!" he said aloud, "the time for explanation hasn't come yet; we need not decide anything till it arrives."

Here the park gates were reached, and the conversation was brought to a close. Just as Gipsy turned into the gate, a gentleman came out of the lodge; he stood a moment at the threshold to talk to a chubby-faced child of the lodge-keeper; he was the clergyman whom Lettice had met upon the road.

"Holla! there's some one whom I don't know," said Tom, as he returned the stranger's salute.

"Who is he?"

"He's Mr. Grey, the new curate."

Lettice soon found that her cousin's advent entirely changed the current of her life at Dolethorpe. Dulness vanished in Tom's genial presence.

The two cousins spent most of their time together, and most of it out-of-doors. Tom acted as guide during cross-country walks, discoursing learnedly the while on the condition of the crops, and laughing heartily at the dearth of information betrayed on matters agricultural by his companion in her replies. Under his tuition, Lettice learned to distinguish growing wheat from barley, and barley from oats; she even attempted, though her efforts were not crowned with absolute success, to grasp the difference between mangolds and turnips. She took long drives with her cousin, scouring all the

places of comparative interest in the neighbourhood. Sometimes—with the ignominy of inevitable defeat before her—she consented to engage in a combat at lawn-tennis with Tom, but the heat of the weather often proved a pretext for laying down her arms. Then she would make her way to a seat in the shelter of the yews, and Tom would sprawl on the grass beside her, while she, perhaps, would take up a book, and read aloud.

Lettice tried to instil into Tom something of her own love of poetry. The task proved beyond her powers. The young man could not—to quote his own barbarous words—"make head or tail" of Browning, and it seemed to him, in his irreverence, that "Tennyson went a long way round to say very little." Spenser did come more nearly home to him. The conflicts of the Faery Knights stirred an admiration easily won by deeds of physical courage. But the "fine footing," which Spenser bids his reader "trace" was altogether ignored by matter-of-fact Tom; he failed to see through the allegory any picture of spiritual warfare or spiritual knighthood. But he liked to watch his cousin, as she read, to see, as the inner meaning of some passage flashed upon her, the colour mount to her face, and the rapt look deepen in her eyes, while a strange hush came into her voice. "She does care tremendously for the stuff," Tom would say to himself.

The intimacy between the cousins increased daily. Tom told Lettice almost all his personal history. She knew all about his father and his home, all about his mother and sisters, and the paternal acres to which he was to succeed. In return, she told him sparkling little stories of her experiences in Continental cities.

When Tom had spent about a week in Dolethorpe, an event occurred which afforded subject for conversation at all the tea-tables in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Gray, the Dolethorpe curate, who had hitherto been known as an impecunious and insignificant individual, came in unexpectedly for a large fortune, under the will of a distant relation. On the very day when he learned the change in his circumstances he called at the Manor House, and in an interview with Mrs. Vincent delivered himself of his good news.

Tom and Lettice were not at home; the curate met them when, his visit being over, he crossed the park on his way home. Lettice wore a plainly made black dress and a huge "æsthetic" black hat; her hands were full of wild flowers.

The curate glanced at the flowers. It occurred to him vaguely that an opportunity was presenting itself for an allusion to Shakespeare's "sweets to the sweet." But the elation consequent on his new prosperity had all gone out of his manner; he was shy and awkward; and an endeavour to perpetrate a compliment ended in an unintelligible mumble.

That evening, at dinner, Mrs. Vincent had much to say concerning Mr. Gray, his visit and his confidence. "It's a most astonishing affair. A third or fourth cousin, whom he had never seen, has left him a fortune, which is fairly *e-nor-mous*," she remarked, dwelling with infinite satisfaction on each syllable of the adjective.

"Pon my word! Gray, of all fellows!" responded Tom, as he helped himself to pepper. "Will he resign his curacy?"

"Really, I can't say—pass the salt, Lettice—probably, he has not, as yet, made any definite plans."

That evening, after Lettice had gone to bed, Mrs. Vincent detained Tom for a few minutes conversation. The old lady was sitting, knitting, in her accustomed corner of the drawing-room. "I've something to say to you about Lettice, Tom," she began, as she patted down an excrescence in her work, and eyed it sideways, as if with a lurking suspicion of imperfection.

"What is it, granny?" Tom rested his elbow, on the mantelpiece; he turned round a little sharply, at the sound of Lettice's name.

"Well, you two young people have been together for some time, now. And, from all that I see, I have reason to believe that you don't look favourably on my plan for a marriage between you."

Tom hesitated, "We—we—don't like dictation," he said bluntly. "But why do you—"

"Dictation indeed!" Mrs. Vincent smiled. She held up her finger for silence, and she said no further word, till a landmark had been reached, in the computation of her stitches.

"Why do I broach the subject, now? Because, I happen to have altered my mind about the marriage."

"Altered your mind?" Tom spoke in an amazed tone.

"One, two, three—yes. Far from desiring an engagement between you, now, I should refuse—four, five—my consent to such an event. I am willing—six, seven, eight—to act liberally by you both, so long as you remain single, but if you marry, you won't receive a farthing from me."

Tom's face grew red and angry, "Come now, granny," he said, "if you choose to change your mind with every wind that blows, you needn't expect us to change our minds too."

"Don't talk nonsense, Tom. I don't ask you to change your mind; it is I who come round to your way of thinking. You resented my dictation, with regard to your marriage—well, I give up the idea of a marriage altogether. I have other plans. And now, light my candle; I'm going to bed."

"I can guess your plans," said Tom hotly, as he applied a match to the wick of a candle. "It's significant enough that you form them on the very day that you hear of Gray's good fortune. It's easy to see that Gray admires Lettice; it's easy, too, to see that he has suddenly become an important person in your eyes. And—"

"Come, come, Tom; I'm waiting for my candle. Lettice's admirers have nothing to do with you."

"Yes, they have—they have. Lettice is my cousin, and we are first-rate friends. It's just horrible to find that these mercenary schemes are made for her future, and that her own wishes on the subject are left out of sight altogether. You insult her when you suppose that she can be disposed of so readily. It's—it's a kind of *sacrilege*," said Tom, who was not always precise in the matter of language, nor very certain of the meaning of sundry trisyllabic words. "I am sure that Lettice doesn't care for Gray."

"I haven't said anything about Mr. Gray; don't be absurd, Tom. I have only forbidden you to marry Lettice; and as you don't wish to marry her, you have no ground for complaint. Good night," and Mrs. Vincent made her way out of the room.

In the morning the matrimonial prohibition given to Tom was repeated to Lettice.

If a new era had begun in the lives of the cousins, their outward relations suffered no change. The contact between the two natures—the one intellectual, ardent, apt to take too highly coloured views of life, and to fall into small affectations—the other practical, sturdy, honest, wanting in a sense of poetry, and devoid of any high intellectual aspiration—was a matter of unconscious advantage to them both. A certain brusqueness in Tom's manner grew less pronounced. Lettice, too, had learned something from Tom. Under the influence of his utter simplicity, she had dropped, by degrees, many of the eccentricities of language current among members of the *soi-disant* æsthetic school. It was useless to waste "intensities" of expression on unromantic Tom, who would only receive them with a blank stare, or a bewildered "What?"

Mr. Gray came often to the Manor House by Mrs. Vincent's invitation. He bore his new honours meekly enough. He would sit almost silent during his visits, watching Lettice, and allowing Tom to take the lion's share in the conversation. But for Gray's unconquerable diffidence, he could have talked much better than Tom; he was, by far, the cleverer man of the two; he possessed, too, a delicate sensibility, and a gentle, unselfish character. He watched Lettice, as we have said—watched her closely when Tom spoke to her, and he drew his own conclusions from the effect produced upon her by her cousin's words. The gist of those conclusions he communicated to Lettice one day during an excursion which he had made, in company with the Manor House party, to the ruins of an abbey church in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Vincent had taken Tom under her own wing; Gray and Lettice were walking together across a field leading from the abbey to the nearest village.

"There's something which I should like to say to you, Miss Delbridge," the curate began, in a voice which gained unusual strength from unusual fixity of purpose.

Lettice looked up, an unspoken dread in her eyes. But she recovered her equanimity, when Gray went on quietly—

"I am thinking of leaving Dolethorpe for good."

"Indeed!" Lettice had begun to breathe freely. "I am sorry for your decision, Mr. Gray. But I am not surprised. You have the world before you where to choose; and Dolethorpe is dreadfully dull."

"Oh! I am very fond of Dolethorpe," the curate responded simply.

There was a moment's silence.

"I am going," the young man went on, "not because Dolethorpe is dull, but because—" the shy eyes looked down into Lettice's face—"because I love you, and because you don't care—and will never care—for me. I know I have long seen—that you have no love to give me. But"—with a gentle sigh—"I thought that I should like you to know that I love you, very dearly, and that go where I may, I shall never forget you. You will forgive my saying this. I have no right to trouble you with protestations or petitions." In his earnestness, the curate had shaken off much of his awkward diffidence; there was about his uncomplaining acceptance of the inevitable, a sim-

ple, manly dignity, which reminded Lettice, somehow—spite of minor differences—of certain conflicts and victories of her well loved Faëry Knights; there were tears in her eyes when she turned to answer him. In the midst of her admiration, and her pity, there came a swift thought of Mrs. Vincent; what would granny say, if she had heard Mr. Gray, the girl wondered. Lettice, like Tom, had little doubt that the old lady looked with favour on Mr. Gray, as a suitor. The girl determined to keep the curate's confidence alike from Tom and from Mrs. Vincent. His secret was his own, not hers, she told herself.

At last, Tom's last evening in Dolethorpe came. The cousins sat together under the yews. They talked only by fits and starts; the depression of a coming parting was over them both.

Tom stretched his long length on a rustic chair; his hands were clasped behind his head. Lettice had established herself on a camp stool, beside him, a heap of roses in her lap. She had stopped midway, in the task of arranging her flowers into a bouquet; she rested her chin on her hand, and dreamily watched the shadows chase each other across the lawn. It was a lovely evening. The sun was sinking amid a mass of gorgeous coloured clouds; the garden was bathed in crimson light; beyond, through the park, came the glimmer of golden fields.

"So this is our last evening!" said Tom softly.

"Yes." The girl answered, without turning her head.

"My visit has passed quickly and very pleasantly. We have been good friends, eh Lettice?"

Lettice did not at once answer. "I almost wish," she said, at last, passionately, "that you had never come. It will be all the lonelier for me when you are gone."

"I shall be lonely, too," in a low voice.

"Oh, for you, it is different."

"Why different?"

"I have no friends; granny and I lead a life of the dullest routine."

One of Lettice's roses fell to the ground. Tom stooped, and picked it up, but he did not restore it to its owner.

"For you it is different, I say. You are going home to your own people, and to friends. Perhaps"—with a little laugh, which was meant to herald a joke, but which sounded rather mirthless somehow—"you will even see the lady—I don't know her name—of whom you spoke to me the first time I saw you—the 'some one,' whom you hope one day to make your wife."

"Do you remember that nonsense?" Tom exclaimed, almost angrily. "I know now that it was nonsense. I may have had a fancy in a certain direction, but it was just a fancy, and it has died a natural death."

Lettice turned her attention to her flowers. Soon the bouquet was made up; she rose to take it to the house, but Tom stretched out a detaining hand. "Stay a moment," he said entreatingly.

The girl turned and waited. "What do you want?"

"I want you." A longing look came into Tom's eyes; he caught Lettice's hand and held it in his own.

"I love you, Lettice; I love you with all my heart. I did mean to keep our old compact, to be friends, and nothing but friends, but you stole

my heart, in spite of myself; and now I cannot bear the thought of living my life without you. I am not a bit worthy of you, dear. You are clever and brilliant, and I am a dull, stupid fellow—too stupid even now to find words for half the devotion which I feel for you. But I love you with all my heart. Can you care for me, Lettice?"

There was silence.

"I am waiting for my answer," Tom said at last, in a breathless voice. "You will be pitiful; you will not keep me in suspense. Tell me," drawing nearer to the girl, with a gesture of supplication, "is my answer 'Yes' or 'No?'"

* * * * *

The sun had disappeared; darkness was gathering over the garden, and a fen mist wrapped the yews from sight, when Tom and Lettice made their way back to the house.

"I am glad," the young man was saying eagerly, "that Granny is opposed to the idea of a marriage between us. No mercenary motive can be ascribed to our engagement now."

"Oh, Tom," shrinking back as the house was neared, "what will Granny say when she hears our news?"

"I don't know," with a light-hearted laugh. "Let her say what she chooses. We are not dependent on her caprices. I have enough tin," with a little air of boyish triumph, "for us to begin life with, dear."

"By-the-by," an unwelcome memory crossed the young man's mind, "this engagement of ours will be a blow to some one on whom, according to your hints when we first discussed Granny's scheme, I have had cause to look as a rival."

Lettice coloured. "For long enough you have had no rival," she said gently. "My old fancy, like another fancy of your own, sir, is all over and done with now."

Over and done with! Listening to Tom's resolute—albeit unmusical—voice, Lettice had no longer an ear to give to the melodious voice which had haunted her memory since it first spoke to her on the Venetian balcony of sweetness and light, and of the beauty of communion between two kindred souls.

* * * * *

"Lettice and I are engaged to be married, Granny," blurted out Tom, as he entered with Lettice, the light drawing-room where Mrs. Vincent sat in her accustomed corner. He was prepared for a hostile reception of his announcement; his voice had a distinctly combative tone.

The old lady looked up as the cousins entered.

"Why don't you sit down?" she asked, irrelevantly. "You just block out my light."

Tom tumbled into a chair, awkwardly conscious of an anticlimax to his show of defiance.

"I don't think that you heard what I said, Granny," he ventured again, "Lettice and I are engaged to be married."

"Yes, I heard."

The old lady took off her spectacles, and rubbed them meditatively. Tom glanced towards Lettice, as if for inspiration. What did granny mean, by her apparent absence of interest?

"I am afraid," he stammered, "that you will be displeased—"

"No, I am not displeased," Mrs. Vincent answered, quietly.

"Not displeased? I thought that you said—"

"Wall children!" interrupted granny, "I suppose that I must put you out of your suspense, though Tom's face of mystification is an amusing sight to see. This engagement of yours doesn't displease, and doesn't, in the least, surprise, me. Displease me—*why, I planned it myself, long ago.* Very soon, after Tom came, I found that you had virtually fallen in with my plan, and that you were in love with each other. I watched you both, as you mooned about, playing at being friends. You didn't deceive me, though you possibly deceived yourselves; you were not friends; you were lovers, all along. But presently I discovered that there was an obstacle in your way to matrimony. You were disinterested people, forsooth, and the obstacle was—pecuniary advantage! You were independent minded people, and the obstacle was—granny's dictation! Upon my word, you showed yourselves a pair of ridiculous children, whom I had half a mind to leave to your own devices. But my good nature prevailed. I turned round, and withheld my consent to your engagement. I let you think, too, that I encouraged Mr. Gray's evident liking for Lettice, but I had, in reality, told him that I believed there was no hope for him with regard to her. He has made up his mind to leave Doletorpe, and it is to be hoped that he will find a happier fate awaiting him elsewhere. I was sorry for him—poor fellow—but I found him a useful card to play, in order to force your hands. Well! things turned out as I expected. The obstacles of pecuniary advantage and undue dictation being—or seeming to be—removed, you shortly became—as I foresaw you would become—engaged."

The lovers glanced at each other.

And so Granny's mystery was solved. Her matrimonial scheme had come to a successful issue after all, and its progress had called into play diplomatic qualities, of which she was justly proud.

Too happy to indulge any resentment at the fact of being tricked, Tom laughed a loud ringing laugh.

"We have given you a load of trouble, Granny; and, as you say, we didn't deserve it a bit. But you will wish us happiness now, will you not?" he inquired.

"Yes, my boy, I wish you every happiness. You are my favourite grandson, Master Tom, spite of your perversity, and your headstrong ways; and I expect you to justify my preference by turning out a good husband, as husbands go. As for Miss Lettice"—here Granny took the girl's hand, and patted it with an air of kindly proprietorship—"if she isn't yet perfect, according to an old-fashioned woman's notion of perfection, she has plenty of time, and plenty of wit, to learn better things, and I don't doubt that she'll make an excellent wife, one of these days. Circumstances were against her in that rambling life of hers, which has made life here with me seem, by contrast, very dull and formal. I don't bear either of you a grudge for your reluctance to fall in with my plans for your happiness. I wish you joy with all my heart."

"Dear Granny!"

Tom and Lettice were married before many months had passed. Granny's good wishes for their happiness were abundantly fulfilled, and life's pathway, for them, had the sunshine on it.

THE PORCUPINE.

"**F**RETFUL" is an excellent epithet for the porcupine. Yet in the Ghost's speech, "fretted" would have been better. For though it is perfectly true that the former characterizes the animal's disposition to take offence quickly, the latter would have assisted out the spectre's meaning. "Each particular hair on your head," he would then have said, "would stand on end with horror, like the quills upon the porcupine when he is out of temper." As it is, he seems to imply that the animal's quills are always standing on end, which is not strictly true. Now Milton has the line, "chafed wild boar or ruffled porcupine," and "ruffled" is admirable, conveying two facts in one word—the agitation both of body and mind. Its occurrence of this beast in another poet, also conjoined with the boar, is perhaps noteworthy, as in myth the porcupine is a vague sort of animal, occupying a place somewhere between the boar and the hedgehog. In the Dragon of Wantley we have the other association presented to us—its hedgehog side:

Had you but seen him in this dress,
How fierce he looked and how big,
You would have thought him for to be
Some Egyptian porcupig.
He frightened all, cats, dogs, and all,
Each cow, each horse, and each hog;
For fear they did flee, for they took him to be
Some strange outlandish hedgehog.

Yet the poets, three at any rate, apply the metaphor to woman. Thus Cowley, singing of Beauty, says:

They are all weapons, and they dart
Like porcupines from every part.

and Byron has

Those cursed pins,
Which surely were invented for our sins,
Making a woman like a porcupine
Not to be rashly touched.

Qui s'y frotte s'y pique was the legend on Charles the Bold's device of a porcupine. Another heraldic whim about this animal, and one that might have attracted the poets, is the Colonna's motto of *Decus et tutamen in armis*, wherein is contained a wholesome moral both for individuals and nations, and a practical fact, of which the porcupine is most thoroughly well aware.

The reference in Cowley's lines, quoted above, to the "darting," is an allusion, of course, to the fiction—a very ancient one—that the porcupine can shoot its quills like arrows. When the animal charges an enemy—which it does *backwards* by the way—it often, no doubt, leaves a quill or two sticking. Also, when the skin is contracted for the erection of the quills, a loose one may, no doubt, sometimes fall out, and seeing how sudden and violent the muscular action is, it is not inconceivable that such a loosened quill might seem to be "shot" off. But there is no deliberate archery in the beast. It is not so deficient in sagacity as to fire its weapons away.

I find in Mrs. Bury Palliser's fascinating volume the following passage:—

"In 1397, Louis, Duke of Orleans, instituted the Order of the Porcupine, and on the occasion

of the baptism of his son Charles, he took this animal as his emblem, with the motto 'Near and Afar,' alluding to the vulgar error that the porcupine is able not only to defend itself from close attack, but can throw its quills against more distant assailants, Duke Louis meaning thereby to convey that he would defend himself with his own weapons, and that he would attack his enemy, John, Duke of Burgundy, as well at a distance as near. Louis XII. abolished the Order after his ascension to the throne, but retained the hereditary badge of his family, and took two porcupines for the supporters of his arms. His cannons were marked with the porcupine, and his golden 'écus an porc-épic,' were much sought after by the curious." To this is added a note: "On the submission of Paris, in 1436, the Constable, Richemont, goes to dine at the Duke of Orleans' Hotel du Porc-épic, and in 1438 the Order was conferred on a lady, *Mdlle. de Murat*."

From the French name, of course, comes our own word—"Porcupig."

PHIL ROBINSON.

"THE ORCHARD."

SOME IDEA OF A PERSIAN BOOK.

BY J. W. SHERER, C.S.I.

IT would not be without interest to turn over the pages of a book which had amused or instructed a great multitude of minds, even if the subject or its treatment were wholly alien to our modes of thought and taste. But in the case of the volume now proposed for most cursory notice, —the "*Boostan*;" or, *Orchard of Sheikh Suadi*,"—there is much to gratify the European reader, both in the matter and the manner of the composition. It was written in the year 1257, the epoch of our Roger Bacon, and has for six centuries retained its popularity; there being little or no archaism in its Persian which should prevent its being completely understood and appreciated in the present day.

Boostan means the place of fragrance, and the term might well be used for a garden; but as another book by the same author is entitled the "*Rose Garden*," this may, without any impropriety, be called "*The Orchard*."

In drawing up this slight sketch, a translation of the work, published in 1879, by Captain Wilberforce Clarke, R.E., has been used for the sense though not for the actual rendering, which, with him is too baldly literal, being intended for students, to whom it must be a welcome boon. The present writer has, however, studied the Persian original, as a text-book, many years ago, in the College of Fort William, and is familiar with Oriental phraseology.

"*The Orchard*" is a poem of upwards of 4,000 couplets, rhymed couplets of eleven feet, such as when recited in the East, are generally given in a sing-song tone, with rather an elevation of the voice at the end of the second line; a mannerism Americans are, rightly or wrongly, said to affect. Little boys at school add to this not inharmonious snuffle a droll bending of the body backwards and forwards, which, when there are many of them, has a laughable look. The poem consists of ten chapters on such subjects as Humility, Content-

ment, Prayer, &c., with an introduction, as is generally usual, in praise of God and the Prophet, and, in this instance, an eulogium on Abu Bakr, the then reigning King of Persia.

Such abstract subjects as have been mentioned promise some dullness; but this is avoided by rapidity of illustration: either an aphorism leads to an anecdote or the anecdote starts off and finally introduces the aphorism. There is at times great delicacy in the thought, and picturesqueness in the lightly touched vignettes frequently occurring. The garment of another language conceals some of the verbal plays, alliterations, and resonances, but these, though generally delighted in by Persian readers, and affording the local flavour, would require frequent explanation.

In attempting to give some idea of the anecdotes, the striving after literal accuracy has been quite abandoned, and no wish is entertained but to reproduce the point aimed at, in language equivalent to that of the text. In the chapter on Equity, an account of a famine at Damascus is met with, which is much admired.

"Such a famine occurred once in the city of Damascus, that lovers forgot their endearments. The sky overbending the earth was so niggardly that the crops and the dates could not wet their lips. Ancient fountains were dried up; if there were water at all it was the tears in the eyes of orphans. If smoke curled out of a window, it was really the smoke of a widow's sigh. The trees stood haggard like begging dervishes; stalwart arms hung languid and limp. There was no verdure on the mountain, no budding branches in the garden. The locusts ate the leafage, and men ate the locusts. In this emergency a friend visited me, so emaciated that he was literally skin and bone. And yet his position was high; he was master of rank, and gold, and estates. 'Friend of upright disposition,' I cried, 'what sorry case has overtaken thee?' But he loudly answered in anger, 'Art thou bereft of reason? When thou knowest and yet askest, the inquiry is fatuous. Art thou not aware that distress is overwhelmingly dominant, and that trouble has reached its uttermost bourn? The rain descends not from heaven; and heart is so lost that complaints no longer ascend to heaven.' After a pause, I replied, 'But for thee, fear has no penalties; the poison is innoxious where the antidote also exists. Others may perish from want, but thou—with thy wealth! The duck has no alarm at the thunder shower.' The statesman in vexation gave me a look, the look a scholar gives the blockhead. 'My friend,' he said, 'a man may be safe on shore, but can he rest whilst those he loves are drowning? My face is yellow, but not from famine; from grief, rather, for the foodless and forsaken. The good man is not satisfied with sound limbs, the wounds of others distress him. Stout of heart and strong of body as I am by nature, I tremble to behold a wound. When one stands by the side of the sick, one's own health is deranged. When I see the Dervish starve, the morsel in my lips becomes distasteful and poisonous. When the prison door closes on my companion, the garden ceases to be a plesance for me.'"

In the Book of Beneficence a little story is told, in which all the accessories are eminently Oriental, and it is, in its way, very graphic.

"A young man bestowed a small coin on an

aged beggar, thus satisfying his wishes. But the sky soon looked down upon that young man in the commission of a crime, and the Sultan sent him to the shambles. Then there was a hurrying of soldiers, and an uproar of the people—sightseers at every door; sightseers lining the street, and crowding the roofs. And forming one of the throng, the old dervish beheld his friend a captive in rough hands. His heart was wounded—that heart the young man had won. He raised a cry, 'The Sultan is dead! The world remains; but mercy he has taken with him.' He wrung his hands as if in sorrow. The soldiers, with their drawn swords, stopped to listen. There were shouts and a scuffle, and wild with haste they rushed to the royal court. The king was sitting there on his throne. The young prisoner had escaped in the confusion. The dervish was hauled by the neck into the Sultan's presence. The king, with great dignity, and with an awe-inspiring manner, asked him, 'Why didst thou desire my death? If my disposition and conduct be good, thou desirest a calamity to mankind.'

The brave old beggar answered, "Sire, the world is a bonds slave to those of thy order. By my false word no harm was done. Thou didst not die, and a hopeless one saved his life." The king considered this excuse; and it ended in his giving the dervish an alms, and excusing his offence."

In the Book of Contentment, a certain puss was brought by misfortune to a tranquil state of mind, as is thus related.

"In an old woman's house, a cat who had seen better days, and whose circumstances were straitened, lived in discontent. One day it ran off to the Royal Banqueting Hall, in hope of luxuries; but the slaves at the gate let fly arrows at it. Coming back over the plain, bleeding from its sides, it cried: 'If I can only get beyond those arrows, I will live in perfect satisfaction with my mouse and my old woman; let the hut be as ruined as it may.' Ah! my soul, honey is not worth the sting. Syrup of dates and peace of mind are far better!"

In the chapter on education, the poet goes into the subject of matrimony, and lays down some rules with regard to the gifts and graces of women. A good disposition he makes the first desideratum, and holds that an ugly, kind wife is better than a beautiful cross one. But he is forced to admit that if loveliness and excellence can be combined, the conjuncture is fortunate indeed. "A good, order-loving, chaste wife," he says, "makes a poor man a king." And "if she be chaste and pleasant in her conversation, it is better not to look at her beauty or at her deformity." He does not recommend staying at home, if the partner makes things disagreeable. He would have approved of club life, had he lived in our epoch—under certain conditions.

"The parrot," he remarks, "who has a crow in his cage, considers escape advantageous. If you cannot amuse your head by wandering, you will have to submit your heart to hopelessness. To go bare-foot is better than a tight shoe, and the labour of travel is preferable to the nuisance of a wrangle at home."

But Saadi requires women to be more retired than would suit the habits of the present day—"May a wife's eyes," he emphatically wishes, "be blind to strangers, and when she leaves her home, may it be for the grave."

There may, however, be a prize in the lottery. "The beautiful wife of sweet disposition is a man's companion and his fortune at once." But he adds rather grumpily, "there is only one remedy for the spouse who is plain and cross together.—divorce." What would Leo XIII. say to such a sentiment?

The passages hitherto quoted are perhaps unfamiliar; but there is one fable in the division headed Humility which has a wide-spread notoriety.

"A rain-drop fell from a cloud into the sea, and was overcome at the immensity of the ocean. It said 'Where this main is, what am I? If it exist, then by heaven, I exist not.' But whilst thus abased, a shell received it in its friendly bosom. And promoted by the favour of the sky, it became at last a pearl, selected for the royal necklace. And thus through humility it was exalted, and by seeking nothingness was rewarded with existence."

In the chapter on Gratitude, there is a pathetic narrative—

"A young man would not listen to his mother's advice; the slow fire of sorrow burnt her heart. When she could not prevail, she brought in a cradle, 'Ah, loveless one!' she cried, 'thou hast forgotten thine infancy. Thou wast weeping and tired and small, and yet through the long night, for thy sake, I resisted sleep. Thou wast not strong and wilful then; in thy cradle there, thou couldst not drive away a fly. Imagine thee, lusty now and rejoicing in thy youth, when thou couldst not struggle with a solitary fly! And once again, at the bottom of thy grave, thou wilt be in like helpless state; not able even to repel an ant from thy prostrate body!'"

In the Book of Repentance, the poet relates of himself:—

"I remember in my father's time (may the rain of mercy constantly descend on him!) that he purchased one day for himself a tablet and a book, and for me a little golden ring. I was beguiled in the bazaar, by some crafty adventurer, to part with this ring for a single date. For what do children know of valuables—sweetmeats seem to them far better? Ah, thou didst not recognize the true value of life, but didst barter it away for worthless ease!"

Occasionally, with abruptness, in the midst of these anecdotes, there bursts in a cry—a pensive cry, which seems to come direct from the heart. An instance may be found in this same Book of Repentance.

"One day, two verses touched me to the quick, for a minstrel, sweeping his strings, sang with sweet iteration:—

Ah me! when we are gone,
The rose will bloom again,
And let itself be won,
If nightingales complain,

When we are gone I
Ah me! when we are clay,
The seed-time will come round,
Blossoms will load the spray,
And harvests gild the ground,

When we are clay!

Sometimes the morals to Saadi's stories are quite unexpected. He tells a little tale of wasps "I have heard," he says, "that a man experienced house-venom, for the wasps made a nest in his roof. His wife said, 'Do not carry out your intention against them. Poor things! you would

not see them exiles from their native home.' The wise man went to his daily task, and one morning the wasps stung his wife unmercifully. She whimpered from the roof to her neighbours—stood at the door, and indeed wandered down the street, lamenting. The husband meeting her, said, 'Do not perplex mankind with your misfortunes. You were the person who said, 'Spare the poor wasps.' "

So far so well; and the reader might naturally expect some denunciation of affected sensibilities and ill-considered interference. Not a bit of it. The moral is—and it is one Saadi has elsewhere often repeated—"What is the use of benefiting bad people? Forbearance to evil-doers is leniency to evil." This is very curious. Saadi would have been dead against reformatories. The screaming woman does not awake his sympathies; she should have destroyed the wasps. The Book of Prayer begins with the pretty image of wintry trees lifting up their empty hands in supplication to God, in the belief that in His appointed time, they should be clothed again with the garments of the spring, and their hands refilled with the burgons of promise.

The following anecdote from the chapter is not without a certain force. "I have been told that one who had drunk greatly too much of date wine staggered into the most holy part of a mosque, and blundering to his knees before the throne of mercy, cried 'O Lord admit me to the highest heaven!' The Muezzin, greatly scandalized, took him by the collar and cried, 'Out! simpleton and reprobate, what call has a dog to enter a mosque? What pious action have you performed, that you should merit paradise? Grace will never shine on your swollen, degraded face?' But the intoxicated person wept, and said, 'Sir, I am drunk; lay not hands on me. Need grace seem so wonderful to thee, when a sinner, such as I am, is hopeful. I did not ask thee to forgive me, O Muezzin; the door of repentance is open, and God is my helper!'"

Inrecommendation of moderate habits, Saadi says:—"If thou art a man, limit the amount of sustenance. What! such a distended interior! Shame! More of a jar than a man. Within the body there is a place for food, certainly; but keep room also for breath and for the thoughts of God. All the space is not for bread." And in illustration of his statement that the truly learned are always modest, the poet reminds his readers of a spectacle often to be witnessed in the orchard:—

"The masters of attainment practice self-abasement: as the bough which is laden with fruit bends its head to the earth." Saadi was evidently pleased with this couplet, as he has introduced it into another of his works.

A CONCLUSION.

(FOR ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.)

BY E. B. HORSBROUGH.

THREE years ago to-morrow since she left! Three years ago since he had grasped her hand and had failed to find expression for the lonesome sense her departure stirred in his heart. But woman-like she had been quick to jump at the conclusion.

"Ben, the city is big and wide, and I shall be no more than a dot in it; but you, out here, away, will stand by yourself as large as life."

For Ben was a strapping, broad-shouldered fellow, and looked what he was—a man who did an honest day's work. "I shall never mix you up with the crowd there. But here at Russett Bridge there's naught for me to do; there's no gain, there's no nothing; 'tis simply being yourself *by* yourself, and nothing to mark your life, for a woman, save the village churchyard, which shadows the peace of the world to come."

Out of all her words he picked those two—"no gain."

"'Tis for gain, Joan, you go?"

"For gain of some sort. Here I have lost mother and father, the little house and the flower garden. I have hands—they are for——"

"Ay, for whom?"

"For what," she corrected.

"'For whom'?"—I said, Joan—"for whom are those hands when your time is up? you said you would come back and see."

"Yes," she rejoined, half in jest; "see if all here pleases me better than the big London town so full of houses and men—oh, and women too, of course." answering his look, "that you would think you were set in a magic ring, simply seeing the same streets over and over again, and yet they are all different—'tis so vast."

"Sometimes you give me strange thoughts," he observed, "as if you make me surely nicer than I really be; as if my speaking self is like something of a spirit come out of me, and 'tis surely not I, the roof-thatcher. Reuben Gathercole! Joan, 'tis St. Valentine's Day, and I'm your lover for the day, and 'tis the last time."

But Joan shook her head. "I wonder at any saint approving of such ideas. It hardly seems as if he were a proper sort of saint, does it?"

And then the carrier's cart had come in sight, and Joan had gathered up her shawl and her parcels. A few last words were spoken, and the girl—his sweetheart—had been driven away—a thatching-order preventing him from accompanying her. And Reuben had not asked her that question which he had put off till this last chance, and which proved to be no chance after all. Neither had he received a line from her—not even a message during those three years. But he had heard in the village that morning she was coming back, and he resolved he would send her a token anyway. For this purpose he went to the further end of Russett Bridge, where the old deaf woman lived who sold dried herbs and stationery, cough cake, soap and candles and acid drops, and asked her after much shouting to take down some of the filagree paper with poetry on it that she had placed for attraction in the window. They seemed lovely, delicate things, too delicate for him to handle, he thought, as he turned them over one by one with ponderous deliberation. He took—for choice—one that appeared to him specially suitable—a bleeding heart, with Cupid's arrow cleft through it, beneath, a verse purporting he was "thine, ever thine" and adding further on, as he felt it should, "never part, from my heart." Satisfied with this, he paid down his silver coin cheerfully and walked away with his purchase. The village was a straggling one, and he met two or three acquaintances as he turned homewards—the smith at his doorway, begrimed and jovial—the carrier, stopping to pick up a passenger and his parcels, and presently two children one crying lustily, the

cause being a soundly administered slap from the elder, because she "would not come on and mother was waiting."

"Lass, a kiss becomes you better than a slap—see little one! here's a ride home! no one shall slap you up there" and he lifted the child, whose tears soon ceased, on to his shoulder. The village cart passed them slowly, the man crying out his meat. "See," said the elder child, "he's gotten a bleeding heart hanging—and the knife beside it—it's like the picture in Goody Smart's window, isn't it Master Reuben?" Reuben, however, said nothing—but he thought dubiously of his purchase. It did not seem the right sort after all for Joan. He was now approaching his own pretty little cottage with its broad strip of garden—no flowers in it visible as yet, save a bed of violets close to the window-wall, whilst near the open gate grew a bank of fern-leaves glistening dewily and freshly green even in the afternoon sunlight.

"There's nought like Nature for sweetness and trueness, and the *livingness* that bides in her seed-flower, tree, or song-bird, it is ever the same," and here the little one, whose elder sister had ran on, put its chubby arms round Reuben's neck and pressed its cold ruddy fingers upon Reuben's cheek—

"Iss on a mou?" queried the child.

He laughed and kissed her; but his rough hair touching her harshly, she drew herself away, half-ready to cry again, the smile in his eyes conquered her, however, for she lisped back: "I *uvv* a man."

With an air of pleasurable shyness Reuben set the child upon his arm, and leaning over his own gate, swung her a moment or two backwards and forwards, until a footstep behind him caused him to turn; he started, and with an almost awe-struck expression, beheld, with surprise and amazement, Joan standing gazing at him.

"'Tis surely you, Joan!"

"Of course it is I—or is it the dress?"

It was verily a womanlike answer; her dress *did* make a difference no doubt, for it was the plain brown uniform of a nursing-sister, the long gauze veil thrown backwards lent a distinct bearing of her own.

"You have come back?"

"To see the old place."

"And old friends?" he added smiling.

"Yes, old friends," but she did not answer his smile.

"I want mother, mother!" cried the little one.

"There, there," he patted her; "I will take you to mother," and he looked round for Joan to accompany them. But no Joan was there; her dark clothed figure was proceeding towards the other end of the village, and Reuben took up his crying burden, disappointed, puzzled and perplexed with Joan's way.

An hour later, as he stood thinking of her again, and tidying up his ferns, he saw a woman crying bitterly, and coming hurriedly towards his cottage. It was the mother of the two children; the little one was very ill; she had left her sister to mind her; she herself was on her way to the next village for the doctor. He would go and bring the doctor, and off he started, and sent the mother back. A minute later, and he retraced his footsteps, and tapped at the door where he knew Joan would be lodging.

"Is," he began, and then he saw it was she her-

self who stood before him, a trifle less composed than in the afternoon, and even in the twilight he fancied she looked as if something troubled her.

"Joan, the little one you saw an hour ago is sick—ill; will you go now? she may be dying, and I'm off for the doctor; even down here we've heard you're clever with children."

"Wait one moment. I will come with you; there may be no need for a medical man."

They walked along in silence until they came to his cottage, then she pushed open the gate, and went quickly through.

"Halloa, Joan! what's that for? We must hasten."

"You—you live here?" she said, coming hurriedly back at his call, and speaking with a sort of hard gasp.

"Yes, I do; but Widow Green's house is by the hedgefield."

"Is it *her* child—not yours?"

"Joan, lass, what's come to you? Is it that—that sets you farther from me nor ever? When you went away, because there was nought to mark your life here, and you would have none of me, for certain-like—leastways till you had seen what London flesh and blood was—and now you've come back—do you mind when you said, 'You out here stand by yourself?' Well, I've stood. Now, tell me what has London life set upon yours."

"It—oh, Reuben!—it has been all hard work. I've had pleasure, too, when my patients loved me, and when I did my best to win back the life for them that seemed nigh away for ever, but my health has nearly broken down—the want of fresh air, the night duty, though I don't complain, for it's a good work, and a right work; but it was hard times with me this last year, and I thought of you, but I didn't like to write; and when they said a fortnight's sea-air would set me right again, I begged for Russet Bridge instead, and they let me come; and, oh, Reuben! when I saw you with—"

Ah! there was Widow Green on the look out—she fancied Reuben had met the doctor on one of his rounds; but when she saw only Joan, she was disappointed and let her disappointment be seen, as a woman and a mother under certain circumstances naturally makes a point of doing. But not when she saw how Joan tended the child, and its moaning quickly ceased as she gently administered to it and eased it so that it presently fell into a calm peaceful sleep.

Next morning Reuben was up early, with both art and Nature's valentine's in his hand, begging their acceptance.

Joan took them both—and then he made his lover's request—to which Joan acceded likewise.

"'Twas the little one that affronted you, lass, not me," he said, "'twas *that*, I saw in your face, and I, not understanding it, could not read it—but it's clear enough now, between us—praise be to St. Valentine! who has made it good to us on his own particular day."

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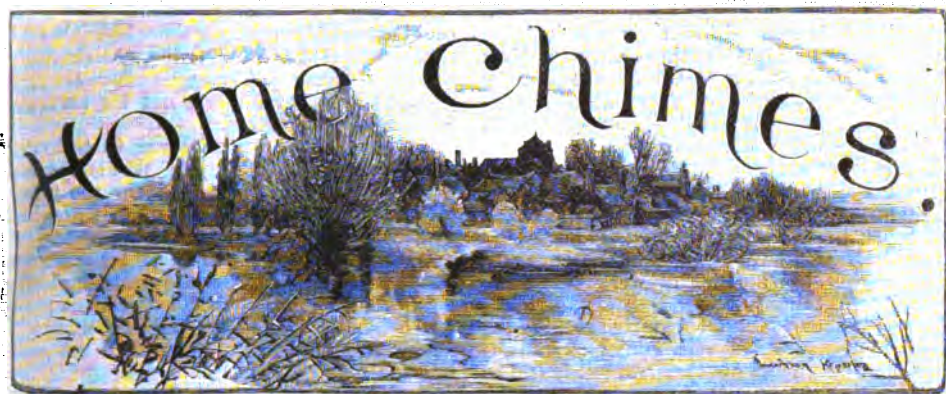
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

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LONDON: FEBRUARY 21, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

"STAND AND DELIVER."

BY MARK RAYSE.

CHAPTER I.

KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD.

I WENT down to the Marquis of Langworth's place, Orford Abbey, following the best recommendations. No doubt I was fully as conceited and egotistical as the young bloods one meets now-a-days, equipped with diplomas and certificates, undeniable evidence of having passed through stern tests with credit and renown. Perhaps in my day examinations were lax, and one had to gain later a great amount of what may now be got at in books, orally, perceptively, and I may add, through the nose.

When I reached Hedginton, the nearest market town, the steward met me, and I found that I had little anxiety forward. Apartments had been provided for me in a quaint and snug old farmhouse on the estate. The steward gave the people the warmest word, and when ensconced in my rooms, I decided that he had not laid on the colours thick enough. I felt at home, everything was clean and cosy, the people comfortably homely, the farmer's wife expressing anxiety lest I should find arrangements fall short of what I had been accustomed to. Her husband was a farmer of the old-fashioned sort, by no means a century behind in processes agricultural. A clear-headed man withal, almost jumping down one's throat for information. Often I found myself eloquent, expatiating upon drainage, expounding the chemical natures of soils, or lecturing on the strata of localities, matters Mr. Grasfield humbly confessed he was not so well informed as he would like to be. Had I been son or kinsman, I could not have expected more kindness, attention and consideration, than fell to my lot. The farmer, his buxom wife, their rosy

daughter Phœbe, the servants even, all seemed to vie in their endeavour to spoil me. Perhaps—I can say it now—I had a taking face and manner. I am sure I was well disposed, if people would put up with that adolescent conceit, I think I have hinted at before, which caused me to carry my chin high, and express myself as Sir Oracle.

I found it a good thing for me that the farm was within easy distance of the "house," and almost central on the estate. I had plenty of work on my hands, despite the local help furnished me. Indeed I found that I had quite as much upon my hands as I could do justice to. My work did not lie all in one place, and I could not well be in two places at once. I was a little anxious, for there was a stipulation that the improvements were to be completed within a certain time. The young Earl would be of age, and the Marquis wished for no unfinished earthworks or disorganization to be apparent when the eventful day arrived. The steward, a bragging, arrogant kind of fellow, was I saw, a little jealous of my powers, and began early to worry, until my nervous fears of being behind-hand were intensified.

"If you are likely to stick fast, young man, don't push us into a corner. I should think there is help to be had for payment."

The steward's carping irritated me more than I cared to admit to myself. To break monotony, occasional evenings I strolled as far as the village, to enter the Langworth Arms. The old inn was much frequented by the farmers of the neighbourhood, and a picturesque old hostelry it was, a curious conglomeration of brick, lath and plaster, thatch and flat tiles. The parlour inside low, the beams overhead within reach, a modern fire-grate inserted where once had been an open range. A chair was placed each side under the beam, and I think nothing more comfortable than a seat in one of them could well be imagined. The steward was a pretty constant caller; often I was incensed that he would patronizingly ventilate the matter there. Perhaps it touched my pride a little, for I fancied that the

old fashioned farmers drew their conclusions: "Steward knew more about things, after all, than that 'ere Lon'on fellow." I cast about many times for some delightful snub that would silence my tormentor without making him an enemy. But I could never think of anything, deploring my deficiency of ready wit. Often enough on my way to my lodgings something cutting I might have said occurred to me; but what use was that? my sluggish brain evolved the rub too late.

"I think I must have help," I let slip one day in his presence, the amount of work before me just then appearing excessive. I spoke reflectively, and the moment after regretted making the admission. I qualified it, seeing his look of self-satisfaction, "I should get through, but it will be better to have a week or two to play with, than be strained the last few days."

"Just what I've been saying all along," said he sapiently. "I should see about it at once. The Marquis is very punctilious, I can tell you."

I was a little exasperated, but I had brought it upon myself. I saw very clearly that if anything should be backward I should have this arrogant fellow strutting, vaunting his prescience, and calling attention to his disregarded counsel. I wrote out an advertisement, and received several answers. I selected an applicant, and was gratified at his quick response. He was down at Hedginton with admirable promptitude. I was quite taken up with him at first sight. I prided myself upon my first impression of any one. He looked capable, was brisk in manner and speech, yet there was an artless bonhomie in his manner that would win over a churl. I found him, as I anticipated he would be, a capital fellow, helpful and thorough. He often surprised me with his ability; at times I felt that I might touch my cap to him.

We became fast friends quickly. I was sorry my friends at the farmhouse had not taken kindly to my proposition that he should have a bedroom there. I took him up with me, but when I saw their reluctance, of course I did not press the point. I was inclined to fancy they did not appreciate him, which to me was strange. He was good looking, and "well put on," full of fun and nonsense when there was legitimate opening for it; he could take a joke good-humouredly, and retort quickly. His wit was irresistible. There was the faintest suspicion of a brogue, and it gave a piquancy to his speech. He made no secret of his nationality, and was ready to wager that better English was spoken in "ould Ireland" than in Britain. I have seen tears gather in the eyes of the grave old farmers too fat and wheezy to indulge in loud laughter. Those who were only casual callers at the inn got accustomed to drop in nightly on the strength of meeting Birnie, for another of my subordinate's accomplishments was singing a good song, but his comic ones were most in favour. I believe Birnie was a treasure in the landlady's eyes, and might have commanded board and lodging at the inn, free of expense. She was a widow, and a few times I teased Birnie, for she greeted him with much more fervour than ever she did me.

My opinion of Birnie became a high one. I respected if I did not envy his many-sidedness. He was irreproachable. Every Sunday he trudged off to Hedginton. At first I was puzzled, then I learned that there was no chapel nearer where he

could attend Mass. Sometimes he would get back in the middle of the day; then we had an afternoon ramble, but generally he spent his day in the little town, and of course it was not for me to ask the why and the wherefore.

Birnie was quick to discover that the steward and I were not congenial. Birnie sympathized with me, expressed a disgust for the fellow: he took so much upon himself. I felt grateful that another human being shared my dislike.

"I don't detest the fellow," I said, not quite honestly, "nor wish him the least harm (which I didn't), but I should like to lower him a peg in his own estimation. I wish I had your ready wit. If he banter me I never think of a rub until too late."

Really it was an appeal, and I was a little ashamed making it. I wondered if Birnie would despise me for hinting that I was not averse to shooting bullets I had not the ability to make.

"We'll get at him, sure enough," said Birnie with a wink and a nod that implied an immense reserve of ingenuity.

I laughed agreeably. In my mind's eye I saw my aversion crestfallen and humiliated, his boisterous arrogance gone for all time.

Some months passed without Birnie redeeming his promise, the steward's manner becoming more and more distasteful to me. But Birnie and he seemed to get on well together. Birnie expressed a wish to see the interior of the Abbey. The steward showed him through, taking him where the ordinary sight-seer is not permitted to go. Birnie never refused an invitation inside the "house." He talked rhapsodically of "ancestral homes" and "baronial halls," until I was a little weary of hearing him. I almost regarded him a traitor, he was so intimate with my antipathy.

But one morning Birnie intercepted me. I thought he looked a little anxious, or as if he had slept badly.

"Have you seen the steward this morning?"

"No," I returned. "Why?"

He did not look me in the face, but partly turned away. "Nothing much," he muttered, "only he and one of the servants are going to Hedginton—rent audit. Doesn't the Marquis own a fair slice of Hedginton? I asked the braggart if he was not a little afraid of returning late. You should have heard him bounce of being good enough for any two men."

"Go on, Birnie," said I; "let me know what is in your head."

"I propose we play the highwayman business—'Stand and deliver!—your money or your life!' I am confident we shall scare him heartily. Dick Turpin without the mare—eh?"

"Don't you think there is some danger in it?" I demurred.

"Not there; he will shake like an aspen."

"But then he'll give up the money, and then what? One won't know what to do?"

"If he does give it up, we can return it, and have the laugh of him. I am confident he will be abject. The reason I've waited so long, I wished for something that would not be tame. It is a grand opportunity. Now, what do you say—will you go in for this?"

"I'm your man," I agreed, after a little hesitation. "Now for your plan."

"Oh, here he comes. Talk of the—we'll

have another chat by-and-by." Birnie began talking business volubly.

The steward came up; he had a rolling gait, a huge, bovine, pimply face; for ballast this morning, a more than usual amount of bluster. He had not forgotten Birnie raising the question of his moral courage. Now he was full of derision of "the Irishman," confiding to me what I knew already.

Birnie and I exchanged glances. I pretended to ridicule any doubt cast on the steward's plan. Birnie crept within himself, as if a little awed before the great man, rueful that he had committed himself.

Birnie and I separated, and I did not see him again until the close of the day. But I saw the steward drive from the stables, and stop at the Abbey gateway to pick up the servant.

There was nothing unique in Birnie's plan. The night would be moonlight; a contiguous wheatfield, a wood close to the turnpike road, would screen us from observation the hour or two we might have to wait.

"Oh," said Birnie, "I have had a payment to make; I am regularly cleaned out. It is awkward to be without coin. Have you any money with you? I should like an advance. It wants a week, I know, to the month's end."

"How much do you want?"

He mentioned the sum. "Though I could not consider it exorbitant, being but his month's pay, I did not anticipate a request for more than half the amount."

"I think I can do it, but it will nearly clean me out."

"Never mind, if it will inconvenience you."

"Oh, I'll let you have it. I shall only have to go to Hedginton a week sooner."

"Then, ten o'clock?"

"Ten o'clock."

I took the candle from pretty, rosy Phoebe, and I lingered a moment to smile into her eyes. Yes, it was very certain that I was in love with pretty Phoebe. She knew it, too, although I had not confessed it. My knowledge that I was in love with her came in a moment. Birnie walked down one evening, and Phoebe answered the door. He had kissed the Blarney Stone, and no doubt imagined that it gave him a roving commission. His smooth words would not have excited me, but when he showed a disposition to go further, my blood boiled. I was nearer than he suspected, and, without striking him, I spun him round rather sharply. I think the fire in my eyes warned him that he must be careful. For a moment passion distorted his face; then he seemed to grasp the situation, passing it off with a laugh.

"Oh, I see how the land lays. Why didn't you give me a hint before?"

I looked round, not yet mollified, but Phoebe had beaten a retreat. Then I cooled:

"Well, I decidedly object to a daughter of the house, where I have been used so well, treated as if she were a kitchen drab."

"I beg pardon; I will apologize to her if you like. But you're in love with her, Orchard, or you wouldn't have fired up like that."

I know I stammered and flushed.

"All that is premature, Birnie. I admire and respect her, I admit. She is too good for that sort of thing."

"You might go further and fare worse," said Birnie oilily. "To speak truth, I was a little smitten. You know there is love at first sight."

"I can't think a man in love with a girl would begin chucking her under the chin," I returned stiffly; "if I treated a girl in such an offhand way, I should expect a scream, and also a father or big brother—"

"Taking you by the coat collar, and with a kick—"

"Exactly."

"Bah, plenty of girls, if ever so strait-laced, would look highly indignant, then laugh the moment after at your impudence."

"Phoebe is not one of the sort, then," I reiterated.

"Well, I'm sorry; kick me if you like, then go to the young lady and tell her you've made an example of me, and I am very contrite. Joking apart, I admit it was effrontery on my part."

Of course I couldn't hold out longer; Birnie had cried *peccavi*, and his offence after all was not so flagrant. It caused me to analyze the feeling that moved me to anger. I loved Phoebe; we understood each other.

"Good night, Phoebe!" They had early hours at the farm.

"Good night, Mr. Orchard."

"Mister!" "Phoebe, cannot you call me Will?"

"Would not that be too familiar?" blushed she.

"Not at all; the familiarity is one-sided. I should like to hear it from your lips, Phoebe. What if I were to say Miss Grasfield?"

"That sounds so punctilious," blushed she; "every one calls me Phoebe; I have never been used to anything else. I shouldn't care to hear the 'Miss.'"

"Nor do I the 'Mister'—from your lips," said I with a reservation. "Come, let me hear how it sounds. Will!"

"Will!" repeated she, parrot-wise, or as a child repeating a lesson, not a flavour of sympathy in the word, but for all that with a bewitching smile and a roguery that was irresistible. I laughed aloud.

"That will never do, Phoebe. I shall be unceremonious," threatened I, with a meaning look; "now come, naturally, 'Good night, Will!'"

"Good night, Will!"

The change of tone was magical; it thrilled me. My disengaged arm went round her, my hand resting upon her shoulder. She had no resistance; I looked in her bright eyes; I bent over her sweet face and kissed her ripe lips. That moment I was sure that my love was returned. Never to this day have I forgotten that moment; never while the light of reason remains with me shall I forget it; I hope never to forget it. Dear, sweet, pure and priceless Phoebe!

Instead of closing my bedroom window, I opened it wide. It was a slide, moving horizontally. It was a beautiful night, the air charged with the fragrance of the fir-woods, the cornfields, the scent from flowers in the garden below, the land bathed in a delicious light, the moon on its back having a cool blue iridescence. I blew out my candle, and sat waiting until the house was still. Then, by means of the arms of an ancient pear tree, I made a descent. There was an unavoidable rustling of

the leaves; I fancied I heard a window sash slide stealthily. But what matter? Phoebe only was likely to hear me, occupying a room in the wing abutting to the gable.

Birnie was at the tryst. According to arrangement we both had taken devious routes to escape observation. I met no one, but Birnie acquainted me that he had to proceed cautiously, having caught sight of two or three frequenters making their way home from the inn.

"This waiting will be the worst business," said Birnie, "but I have my cigar case. We shall be quite comfortable behind that close hedge. I dare wager not a soul will come down this road to scent us."

"No," I agreed, "to-morrow, I understand, corn-cutting will be general. Every one will be in bed, getting a good night's rest to work upon. I went to bed too, like a well conducted mortal. At the farm they will be ready to swear to that, if necessary. I used a pear tree as staircase."

"My people left me sitting up, as they mostly do. They never hear me go to bed."

We puffed on in silence some time.

"Is the steward sweet on Mrs. Ford?" Birnie asked; "the housekeeper was within earshot when he vaunted his valour."

"I think they pull together," I answered.

"Humph, there is a bank at Hedginton; if he had much money about him, that would go far to make him nervous, eh?"

"I scarcely think he will be able to bank. They have a dinner—but there may be some arrangement with the bank."

Again we smoked on in silence. It was a choice cigar Birnie had given me, and a lasting one.

"What a time they smoke," I murmured appreciatively, "I don't know that I ever smoked one with such a flavour."

"Yes, they're choice; I'm sorry to say I haven't many left. A friend of mine brought me a bundle or two over seas. I think he got them in Burmah. They can't be long now?" muttered Birnie, but more as if communing with himself.

"I hope not," I returned, some of the fun evaporating. I was cramped. The longer we waited the greater folly our undertaking seemed to me to be. I began to feel a little nervous too, if not alarmed. The moon became overclouded. Something in the air seemed to have growy eery. Birnie's manner had changed. He appeared anxious, too anxious for a man engaged in a practical joke, and his anxiety seemed to be charged with a certain amount of recklessness and insolence. All this struck me as I sat smoking at his elbow. I could see his face, though not clearly defined, but my fancy was that its expression was lowering and desperate.

He was listening intently.

"Wheels!" he ejaculated, "you saw two in the trap?"

"The steward and a servant."

"Good. You seize the horse; I will do the rest, then, nearest way home."

Birnie took the initiative, leaping the hedge to take his station in the shadow of a tree on the opposite side of the road; nearer and nearer the trap approached; I heard Birnie's low whistle, then he muttered inquiringly—

"There are three in the car!"

"Servants," I whispered, "they will be Li mice."

Overzealous men are to be avoided. I felt with excitement. When the trap loomed up, the crown of the road, I rushed forward, scaring the horse and causing it to swerve, the driver unconsciously bearing upon the reins. In another moment I had the horse by the bridle, and presenting my pipe case—in appearance an excellent substitute for a pistol—I shouted—

"Stand! Your money or your life!"

Birnie had followed me up, with what I thought was an imprecation on my precipitation. Sudden there was a voice that electrified me. The Manquis was in the trap.

"Foot-pads, Norris!" The tone was one of surprise, certainly not fear.

There was a flash of light as if from a bull's eye lantern, the report of a pistol, a bullet whizzed past me. It must have been aimed at me deliberately. At the first moment I thought I must have hit; I am convinced to this day that I felt it.

"Hit, I believe," said another strange voice with apparent satisfaction; "don't be a fool, man, on of you follow me."

I was so startled I relinquished the bridle. Another shot whizzed uncomfortably near, the horse went down with a groan, and Birnie rushed past me. Panic struck, I followed him. I saw that he was armed, *he had shot the horse!*

"We have caught a Tartar!" I ejaculated quaveringly.

Birnie answered me with an oath.

"Where are you making?" I asked, a word at a time, as we ran and doubled.

"Look out for yourself; never mind me," he answered tartly. "There will be a row—that man behind us is no servant."

Birnie motioned me back imperiously, sprang at a bank, and scrambled over a fence into the woods—I was for following him.

"Make tracks for yourself!" muttered he, between closed teeth, cursing me for a fool.

I certainly was a prey to indecision, but it flashed across my mind, that in spite of his varied accomplishments, there was something low about my confederate. His polish was but a veneer; his oaths jarred upon me. He had the traits of a hunted human being, of a pariah, a "man wanted." I heard the footsteps gaining upon me, I vaulted over a gate, and dashed into a field of standing corn.

I was so blown I felt that I could not proceed until I had gathered breath.

Almost parallel to where I crouched, the party on the road came to a halt. The horse had been abandoned. I heard voices.

"Lost them. There's so much cover, my lord. That confounded Norris—never saw a man so frightened in my life."

"There were two."

"Yes, my lord, I feel sure one is my man. It seems he's got a pal down. We've made a bad job to miss both of them."

Was I awake or dreaming? It was a strange conversation. It sounded like thieves' slang, or the slang of the thief-catcher, expert in the phrases of the gentry of that calling. I lay still—I did not dare to move.

"We've lost them, my lord. I must get back to Hedginton, and put on the super; if a cordon

drawn, we may nab them before they get far away. Put the telegraph on first thing in the morning—"

"Do you intend to walk back?" returned the Marquis. "No? James, make the best of your way to the stables, put a horse in, and return with it."

"I am sure your lordship is very kind."

"Pooh! it is my duty; besides, the scoundrels have killed my horse."

The steward came up, panting. I heard the Marquis mutter something contemptuous, then the trio followed in the wake of the footman. I ventured to rise erect, considerably perturbed in mind. Should I be able to keep my complicity in the affair secret? Birnie shooting the horse had made confession difficult. I had introduced, countenanced, and backed up a notorious cracksmanship. Everything in our favour, the craven steward delivering up his money, Birnie would have laughed at restitution, a remonstrance on my part—a bullet in me for my troublesomeness.

Birnie was keen of viewing the interior of the Abbey—there was method in all this. What had he contemplated? I was in a pretty scrape. If caught, Birnie might be scamp enough to assert that I was as deep in the mud as he in the mire. My heart was almost in my mouth in my trepidation, but I decided that the best thing I could do would be to make tracks. It would do me no good finishing the night in a cornfield. I took a bee-line through the standing corn to where I judged the farmhouse lay. I was a little out in my calculation, as I reached it, scrambling through the kitchen-garden hedge, to hurriedly climb the pear tree. I was in a panic, and passing through the window, placing my hand upon a small table, it and I came to grief together. I was closing the window, when I thought I heard the one open again. I had made a little noise, but it must be fancy. I was in a mood to imagine anything. Phoebe must have been long asleep.

CHAPTER II.

BROUGHT TO BOOK.

When I came down to breakfast, Phoebe had just put the finishing touches to my table. When I entered the room she would have passed me. I thought she avoided my eyes, a peculiar drooping of her eyelids, a frightened, timid contraction of her features, her lips tremulous.

"What is the matter, Phoebe?"

"Nothing, I hope, Mr. Orchard," she answered me faintly.

"There is something, Miss Grasfield," I said, attempting to be jocular, though I was a long way from being easy in my mind myself, "What do I say about the Mister?"

Phoebe was silent.

"You are offended with me?"

Tears glistened on her long lashes. How I should have liked to ask her if she heard me last night, if she took exception to nocturnal frolics, aye, confessed to her. I might have done, it would have relieved me.

"My sweet Phoebe, you must trust me," said I, detaining her, kissing an almost reluctant mouth. Then I saw an added scare in her expression.

"What is wrong with your coat? You will not wear it this morning, it is torn, look at the elbow."

I pulled the sleeve round, sure enough there was a hole in it, not a tear, a hole of a peculiar shape—ah, the bullet had passed through. Had my elbow been bent the bullet must have crippled me for life.

"I must have another coat. You will run the rent up for me, Phoebe?"

"I am afraid a piece will have to be let in."

"Never mind then, I must let the tailor have it, I can't afford to cast it, it is new."

I breakfasted, changed my coat and proceeded to the Abbey.

"Mr. Birnie, have you seen anything of Mr. Birnie?" I asked, my voice so free from agitation I was myself almost surprised. A posse of men were working at a mound that was being thrown up.

"Not this morning, sir."

I felt myself tapped up on the shoulder. I don't know how a criminal feels, but the fingers and the tap gave me a shock. Turning quickly I faced a perfect stranger, but I had a very shrewd guess who the man was. Not much of the gentleman about him, prompt, self-opinionated and shrewd.

"I have just come away from the farm-house where you lodge, thought I should catch you there. Let us get out of earshot, I wish to have a little conversation with you."

"Oh certainly," I answered agreeably but uncomfortably.

"You have had an assistant—what name?"

"Birnie—Robert Birnie."

"Humph—a new alias."

"I beg your pardon?"

"You had references with him?"

"Yes, highly eulogistic."

"Did you write to the firms, or did he produce them?"

"He supplied them."

"Humph," muttered this person as if quite satisfied that he was the most astute mortal breathing, and by no means satisfied. "You did not write to one or more of the firms, not doubting the man's good faith, but simply that no charge of carelessness might be laid at your door?"

It flashed across my mind that I had taken a good deal upon trust. I was indignant at being taken to task in such a way, my culpability making me more deaf to reason.

"No," I answered him tartly, "the signatures of two or three of the firm were as familiar to me as my own."

"I see."

"Well," said I, nettled, "Mr. Birnie ought to be here now, but he will be here to answer for himself shortly."

"I think not," said my tormentor, detaining me, "he is not to be found this morning."

"Not to be found?"

"No, the bird has flown."

"Pray, what does all this mean?"

"Mean? Well just this. Mr. Birnie, or whatever he chooses to call himself, is wanted. We've had a lot of trouble unearthing him, and he was close at hand after all. They say that if you wish to do anything in secret, go and do it where people would not expect you to have the impudence to go. We ought to have had him last night."

"And pray, sir, may I ask who you are, and what you want my man for?"

I put on a bold front, but my blood ran fast, and my feet were shaking in my shoes.

"I am from Scotland Yard, and he is wanted for a big job in the North. It surprises you, does it? He is a versatile fellow, up to anything. He disarms suspicion, he is such a good fellow, sings a good song, a dab hand at the lingo—"

"But he must have had some insight——"

"Oh, yes," said my questioner, taking me up, almost too quickly for good breeding, "but I think he was in a civil engineer's office, and I believe he has been in a laboratory, and was promising. But there was a wheel loose. Some of his papers might be genuine, dates altered, all the rest forgeries. I fancy he must have had a tip; last night"—here the detective looked hard at me—"we were stopped on the high road. I thought that lively game was out of date. I heard a whistle. I am convinced he was one. He had seen the danger flag, and thought of making a coup and a bolt after rent day. He's a bold dog. The Marquis came down unexpectedly. I had the office given me, and I stepped into his compartment. I told him a thing or two, and he promised to do all he could to help me. It was to his interest. But for a whisper from a little bird, there'd have been a raid on the Abbey before long. From what I can make out, everything was in train. See, I foraged out this at his lodgings. It was in a coat. He hadn't time to pack his portmanteau."

I looked at the sheet of paper; it was a roughly drawn, but accurate plan of the Abbey. Some marks I could not comprehend.

"Do you mean to say he is a common burglar?"

"No, I give him credit for being an uncommon one. We've only just got on his track really; he is as good at make-ups as an actor. He doesn't degrade himself with paltry lurches; jewels he fancies, cuts good pictures out of frames neatly; when it's plate he has a confederate; you know it's heavy swag. He has a capital fence, that we own to being beat at getting at. I expect he shelters there, for we have always missed him."

How clammy I felt.

"You think I have been grossly imposed upon?"

"Why, man, don't you think so yourself? Come, mister, do you know anything? When you get back yonder you'll find I've been inquiring about you. I am straight with you. Who is his pal here? Any one of these lads a stranger; any one of them he favours?"

"No, not to my knowledge. I have always fancied he has kept his proper distance."

"Humph; had he any one to visit him in his seclusion. Have you seen anything suspicious? Just think a moment. There were two last night. I meant to wing one of them. I almost fancy I did, but the moon clouded. He counted one when he shot the horse. We made a dash; the Marquis is plucky, but I was sure a chase, even in the moonlight, would end in nothing. He has got to know the country."

I was hot and cold by turns. If I held my tongue, if the truth leaked out I should show up badly. In the interests of justice I ought to speak out, let the consequences be what they might. If I made a clean breast should I be exonerated out of my difficulty? There was the horse, a valuable one; the Marquis would be in-

censed thinking of the loss. Would my story be believed? It seemed out of the bounds of probability. For the term of my natural life I would steer clear of practical jokes; things might be unpleasant, but I would be explicit.

"Look here," began I, with a burst of confidence, "I am going to surprise you. I think I have been his sole companion. I have never had the slightest suspicion until last night; his demeanour jarred a little; in fact, I had an impression that I ought to distrust him, that he was too good to be genuine. I never heard him use bad language before. You have discovered that the steward is given to bounce; he has been just a little officious and unpleasant at times. Just to take the conceit out of Norris, Birnie suggested this hoax of a highway robbery, to test the steward's courage. I had no pistol, only my pipe-case. When the pistol shot whizzed past me, I thought it was the biter bit; when the horse fell, at the first blush I thought a shot from the same pistol had settled the horse."

"You mean to say you were in it—a practical joke?" The Scotland Yard man looked his incredulity.

"I do, a practical joke as far as I am concerned. Birnie suggested it, and I demurred a little at first. I wish to heaven I had gone by my first feeling. I certainly did not count upon the Marquis being in the trap, nor Birnie you, I fancy."

"This beats all. You may have things unpleasant. The Marquis may not take it very well. The fact of the possibility of the steward having money with him, and you knowing it, gives the business an ugly look. You have been a cat's-paw. But at the farm yonder, they all declare you went to bed in good time; an uncommonly good looking girl told me that she gave you your candle. I went to look at your bedroom window. Yes, I saw there had been a descent, feet marks, leaves on the ground, knocked off the tree. I asked to look at your coat, but I was told I could see it on your back."

"The fact is I left behind me the coat I wore last night, it will have to go to the tailor. Your bullet went through the sleeve."

"Did it?" exclaimed my friend, delighted that his aim was so near faultless; "but those people yonder were not quite straight, it struck me they were screening you, that they said as little as they could. Now that tale about the coat would have thrown any man off the scent."

"I did not give them any particulars."

"Well no, but hang me, I don't know what to think now. May be he hadn't got the tip. If the steward had handed over the bunce, he would have given it up again unless he meant a bolt. After all he might mean a hoax, to turn the laugh on the steward and lull the Abbey folks. Hoax or not, it is awkward for you. I shan't arrest you, I believe your story, but I shall be bound to take a note of it."

"Mind you, I think now he did mean the money," I said with conviction, "his manner and tone was reckless, desperate. My distrust of him began when we were waiting in ambush. I was inclined then 'to run my back in the hedge'; he revealed himself when our project miscarried. He was wrathful when I rushed into the road, he called me a d——d fool when we were rushing away."

"That was cruel," murmured my inquisitor, with the least tinge of sarcasm; "but now, maybe, you think he was right."

"Well yes, I do," I admitted sheepishly.

"There is something in what you say," said he returning to his old manner; "I think the best thing will be to see the Marquis at once, and you had better come with me."

Here was a pretty complication! See the Marquis! I must say, in common with many of my peers ignobly born; I had some respect, almost an awe for a man who bore a title. There is a divinity that hedges round a king, and surely a lustre about the person of a peer of the realm.

"I don't half like that," I confessed; "can't you give a version of the affair?"

"You had better face it," my mentor advised significantly, "he is not at all unapproachable. You are a young man, he has been one, come along. I will tell the story, you can bear me out, or set me right."

After all, this was better than being locked up on suspicion, or at least taken before a magistrate. I am not quite clear whether I was indictable, but I thought so then.

The Marquis listened coldly, he asked me a few curt questions and I was dismissed. I know I was very red and flurried. I felt myself disgraced, having no more *nous* than to be gulled and led by such a fellow. I ought to have been above such pranks. Men in high places have their escapades, but when brought to book they look uncommonly foolish. The verdict is generally, "they ought to have known better."

"You see," commented the detective, "we all look like fools, the Marquis has been made to look like one, I and the super at Hedginton, and you—"

"Are one," I put in abjectly.

"The worst is, it may get into the papers and all of us be laughing-stocks. You keep it dark; you ought for your own sake. I think we shall nab this fellow if he doesn't get on shipboard. Now I want a description. I've been to Hedginton, I am off again; I know the man better than his clothes."

I walked to the farmhouse humiliated, a sadder and a wiser man. As soon as I appeared in sight Phoebe rushed out of the door. I could see relief in her face.

"Now then?" I began questioningly with a sickly attempt at a smile.

"A man has been here. I didn't like him; he was forward, asking all sorts of impertinent questions about you. Have you seen him?"

"I have, Phoebe; he is not half a bad fellow."

"Is it true that—that the Marquis was stopped on the high road and the horse killed?"

"Quite true, Phoebe. Do you think I was one of the miscreants?"

"No."

"Oh, Phoebe, didn't you hear me clambering down and up the pear-tree?"

She was silent.

"Answer me, Phoebe?"

"Well, yes, I did," admitted she faintly.

"And you told this man I went to bed at an early hour? Fie!"

"No, I didn't; father did. I said I gave you your candle."

"What an ingenious prevaricator! And when

he went to look at my window, how did you get out of that?"

"I didn't say anything; father was indignant. He declared some one had been stealing the pears before they were ripe."

"Ah, but that man was not to be hoodwinked."

"He wished to look at your coat. I told him you had your coat on your back. I didn't say it was the coat you wore last night."

"Where is the coat, Phoebe?"

"In your room. Are you in trouble, Mr. Orchard?"

"'Mister' again," I returned reprovingly; "why not Will? I shall think you suspect me, if you repeat the obnoxious word."

"Are you in trouble, Will?" asked she again, placing her hand on my arm. "I heard you last night; I heard some shots fired."

"Did you, you dainty spy? Well, it is rather an awkward business for me. That scoundrel, Birnie, has led me into a nice scrape, but anything I tell you must not leak out at present. I supposed it a hoax to frighten the steward. But I have been before the Marquis and made a clean breast of it. The detective may wish to look at the coat as evidence of the truth of my story."

I entered my little sitting-room, Phoebe following me in. My coat hung over a chair-back neatly folded. I took it up, but could discover no rent; then on close examination I saw how neatly it had been repaired.

"Have you done it?" I asked surprised.

"Yes."

"Where did you get the cloth requisite?"

"I ripped the lining, I found sufficient turned in."

"Well now," said I, with a pretence of misery, "the detective will never believe my story."

"He will feel the seams."

"I don't think he will return. I don't particularly wish to see him, but I must dine and away back. I have lost my second in command, but I shall not attempt to replace him."

"I never liked him," declared Phoebe.

"No," said I, placing my arm around her, "but I am just a little grateful to him; my heart spoke to me when he impudently wished to snatch a kiss."

"Oh don't, Will—if father were to come?"

"I should bid him 'stand and deliver,'" said I gracelessly. After the shock to my self love, those words ought to have been particularly obnoxious to me.

I avoided the poor steward, but that evening I was conscious that he was tracking me. I stopped when I saw that he was determined to catch me up. When sufficiently near, he bellowed—

"See you, here, Mr. Cleversides, you thought to play a trick upon me, I think *you* were the dupe, I never thought much of the fellow. You may thank your stars your tale was believed."

Poor steward, he had no wish to be convinced that it was a hoax, his pusillanimity had been only too apparent. The detective had twitted him, the Marquis had been contemptuous. Moreover, before the true facts were put before him, he had ridden over to Hedginton—and the local paper just going to press—was prompted by him to give a lively account of the affair, and the vigour with which the miscreants were repulsed. I was taken aback when I found my London weekly had copied the paragraph.

A week later all the papers contained an account of the clover capture on the Liverpool landing stage of one of the perpetrators of numerous burglaries. He had long eluded the police. Another capture was imminent. Doubtless Birnie considered the game played out, and was intent upon pastures new. I read the summary of the rascals' exploits with a feeling akin to admiration, I must admit. How they had contrived to elude the police so long was marvellous. They exhibited an unlimited stock of patience, and once they had spotted their quarry, neither time nor money was an object with them. Birnie was sentenced to fourteen year's penal servitude and so many years police supervision. After he had received his sentence, he confessed that Orford Abbey was to have been rifled, but for the intimation that reached him that the police had a clue to his whereabouts. He hit upon the scheme of relieving the steward of the rent, so as not to go away empty-handed. I read the account over to farmer Grasfield.

"You will think twice before you go in for any more practical jokes," commented the farmer.

But my work was near upon completion. The Marquis looked over my participation in the escapade. I stayed until the festivities. Pretty Phoebe and I attended the ball given by the Marquis to his tenantry. The evening was not one of unmixed pleasure; so many disputed my claim to every dance, that I was mad with jealousy. But I recovered when, leading her to an unfrequented nook, I put the all-important question, and received an answer that caused me to regard with indifference all other aspirants for her hand. There was a proviso—her parents' consent. I think I astonished the worthy farmer by there and then peremptorily bidding him "stand and deliver" his fairest possession.

"Is this a practical joke?" he asked, feigning to believe that the Marquis's hospitality had been too much for me.

"No, I am in earnest this time," I said.

Phoebe and I occupied the back seat of the trap, my arm round her waist to prevent accident.

Sweet Phoebe, the garnish of my life, my help-mate and faithful companion, now, as then, the idol of my heart, what would life be without you!

I am to conclude, without more bathos. Unobserved by me, the wife of my bosom has stolen up behind my chair to read over my shoulder. Her fiat is, I have written quite enough!

A FABLE.

THE red rose to her velvet leaf
Has rolled a tear drop from her heart,
Hers is a beautifying grief,
Love, made the glowing tear to start.
The blush of morning in the sky
Is not so red and warm as she;
Neither do days of Autumn die
Drowned in such colour o'er the sea.
I pass thee, lily, fair and cold,
To me the red rose is more dear,
Because her tender heart can hold
The love from which has sprung this tear.
T. E. KINHEAD MAYNE.

SOME POETS' FLOCKS.

BY PHIL ROBINSON.

Let me hear—

The morning uproar of the fleecy flock,
What time, vociferous, their tardy march
With baying curs impatient their rude load
To the green pastures urge. Loud enquires
The bleating mother for her sundered lamb,
As loud complaining for his mother lost.
With quick infallible perception, she,
Amid the mingled outcry, hears distinct
His slender shrill entreaty, he remote,
With nicety that shames our grosser sense,
Her voice acknowledges, and through the crowd
Winds his insulted way.—*Hurdie.*

THIS sketch is straight from Nature, and therefore admirable. But the poets are, as a rule, exceptionally happy in their treatment of sheep. Most of them are born shepherds; and seem to have an instinctive sympathy with the creatures. With what a nice accuracy they watch them; how exactly faithful they are to the real life of the flocks.

At morning the sheep-fold pours out its fleecy tenants "o'er the glade, and, fast progressive as a stream, they seek the middle field, but scattered by degrees, each to his choice, soon whiten all the land." They are the "restless, ever-wandering," sheep—

Russet lawn and fallows grey
Where the nibbling flocks do stray.

So the morning passes and, the heat increasing, they seek the trees "spreading a shady boon," and "creep close by the grove, to hide from the rigours of day." Here they lie ruminating; ruminant or stand to polish the knotted hawthorns by rubbing against them; and then spread again over the land till evening, when the shepherd convenes his flock and they troop to the fold "with hurried bell and dust-provoking feet." Their dewy fleeces are counted and then they are left.

Not that their days are altogether uneventful. Cowper's "Needless alarm" is an excellent case in point, when they discuss the propriety of suicide in consequence of the overwhelming horrors of the approaching fox-hunt, thinking all the fiends are let loose upon themselves. The description of the mutton-headed folk is delightful:

Awhile they mused, surveying every face,
Thou hadst supposed them of superior race;
Their periwigs of wool and fears combined,
Stamped on each countenance such marks of mind,
That sage they seemed as lawyers o'er a doubt,
Which, puzzling long, at last they puzzle out.

Sometimes, again, dogs worry the flock. Somerville prescribes the proper punishment for any hound caught in such an act.

If at the crowding flock
He bay presumptuous, or with eager haste
Pursue them scatter'd o'er the verdant plain,
In the foul fact attached, to the strong ram
Tie fast the rash offender. See! at first
His horned companion, fearful and amazed,
Shall drag him trembling o'er the rugged ground.
Then, with his load fatigued, shall turn ahead,
And with his curled hard front incessant peal
The panting wretch, till, breathless and astounded,
Stretched on the turf he lie. Then spare not thou

The twining whip, but ply his bleeding sides,
Lash after lash, and with thy threat'ning voice
Harsh echoing from the hills, inculcate loud
His vile offence.

Even if there is no malicious intent, the presence of a strange dog is enough to bring excitement into the day.

Look how a panicked flock will stare,
And huddle close and start and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there.

Sportsmen are out and the guns alarm the flock, as so many poets note. The passing train, the whirling covey, the shouting plough-boy, are each of them episodes of puzzling interest to the woolly folk. Yet they have their amusements also. Panic is not their only dissipation. They are "sportive"—especially as lambs.

I am so old, so old I can write a letter,
My birthday lessons are done ;
The lambs play always, they know no better,
They are only one times one.

The lost lamb affords a theme for countless excellent passages. Who has not, in the course of a country walk, come upon the small wanderer on the wrong side of the hedge, looking in vain for the hole it got through, "having no sense to find the same again," and "calling for help" as it trots up and down in nervous bewilderment, the mother meanwhile pacing backwards and forwards on the other side, and replying with a grave, troubled voice to the pitiful lamentations of her little one. Indeed, getting lost or thinking that it is lost, and straightway surrendering to an excessive pity for itself is almost the normal condition of the lamb.

Soon lost and soon inquiring for its dam,
Who bleats and mumbles at his slender call.

As the "playful," "dancing" lamb, it is one of the insignia of the poet's Spring. Its voice is a "vernal note" like the linnet's, and its presence contemporary with and a co-efficient of budding flowers and sprouting leaves and birds' nests with their eggs. Spring personified comes with golden garlands of furze-bloom and with lambskins sporting round her, "full of May." The small thing's association with the linnet is often very prettily worked in, as where Crabbe has "browsing by the linnet's bed," and Graham, the lamb chasing his twin round and round "the linnet's bush." In Phineas Fletcher's eclogue one of the features of the vernal season is the lamb: "they forget their food to mind their sweeter play," and so too in Bloomfield's "Spring" this charming adjunct of the young year finds, with characteristic affection for Nature, conspicuous description. The passage commencing—

A few begin a short but vigorous race,
And indolence astonished soon flies the place.
Thus challenged forth, see thither, one by one,
From every side assembling playmates run.

makes a delightful vignette.

But of all the metaphors and similes drawn from this inexhaustible source, I would give the palm to Lovelace's;

Lost hearts, like lambs drove from their fields by fears,
May back return by chance, but not by tears.

Then comes Summer, when the gad-fly is abroad, and the shearers a-field—"what time the new-shorn flock stand here and there, with huddled head, impatient of the fly." No one who knows the midsummer pastures can have missed noticing how the restless sheep, worried by insects, can hardly venture to stand still to eat a mouthful, but nibble and walk at the same time, and pitying the poor wretches for their uncomfortable feeding; or how, in despair, they congregate, and, hiding their faces under each other, try to baulk their indefatigable pest. How carefully they keep their noses down in the grass, even though too fidgety to eat, and then suddenly, when one gives the alarm, how the whole company decamps from one side of the field to the other. Not that the shepherd can do much for them; as a rule, he merely leans on the gate, and extends a passive sympathy; so that Quarles' "Emblem," taken from this pastoral incident, goes somewhat wide of the fact:—

Look how the sheep, whose rambling steps do stray
From the safe keeping of the shepherd's eye,
Eftsoon becomes the unprotected prey
Of the winged squadron of buleagrass fly.

The shearing of the sheep, gives poetry many a charming passage. "The gambols and wild freaks at shearing-time," once constituted a favourite Rural Festival. After the creatures, soused one by one into the pool, had been huddled up, and the shearers had got him ready for his work, the "queen" of the day, with her chosen "shepherd-king," came—with bravery of summer flowers, and bright clothes and rustic music—upon the scene, to superintend "the loud-clapping shears," and, later on, when the short day's work was over, headed the long evening's revels:—

Chief, in gracious dignity enthroned,
Shines o'er the rest, the pastoral queen, and lays
Her smiles, sweet-beaming, on her shepherd-king,
While the glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth and wit that knows no gall.

Thomson's description of the scene, "where, ever and anon, to his shorn peers a ram goes bleating" (Keats), is excellent:—

In one diffusive band
They drive the troubled flocks, by many a dog
Compelled, to where the mazy, running brook
Forms a deep pool: this bank, abrupt and high,
And that fair-spreading in a pebbled shore,
Urged to the giddy brink, much is the toil.
The clamour much of men and boys and dogs,
Ere the soft, fearful people to the flood
Commit their woolly sides. And oft the swain,
On some impatient seizing, hurls them in:
Emboldened then, nor hesitating more,
Fast, fast, they plunge amid the flashing wave,
And, panting, labour to the farthest shore.
Repeated this, till deep the well-washed fleece
Has drunk the flood, and from his lively haunt
The trout is banished by the sordid stream;
Heavy and dripping, to the breezy brow
Slow move the harmless race; where, as they spread
Their swelling treasures to the sunny ray,
Inly disturbed, and wondering what this wild,
Outrageous tumult means, their loud complaints
The country fill; and, tost from rock to rock,
Incessant bleatings run around the hills,

At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerable pressed,
Head above head: and, ranged in lusty rows,
The shepherds sit, and whet the sounding shears.

Then stormy Autumn comes with its "huddling"
flocks, and

The sheep before the pinching heaven
To sheltered dale and down are driven
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines.

and so to Winter, with "the dun-discoloured flocks,
untended spread, cropping the wholesome root"—
or as Grahame more prosaically puts it, "on the
turnip-field, in portions due, staked off, the bleat-
ing flock their juicy meal, nibbling partake"—or,
it may be, with the same poor woolly folk piteously
neglected, "the hungry sheep look up and are not
fed, but swollen with wind and the rank mist they
draw, rot inwardly," or as in inflated Thomson—

The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heavens, and next the glistening earth,
With looks of dumb despair, then sad dispersed
Dig for the withered herb, through heaps of snow.

Fond as poets are of their sheep, they hardly
justify their excessive affection for them by the
character which they give the "woolly people."
As flocks they are always "silly," as individuals
they are meekly feeble.

Therefore the sheep, those foolish cattle,
Not fit for courage or for battle,
And being tolerable meat,
They're good for nothing but to eat.

The ram, "the father of the flock," finds but
scanty reference, the truth being that this generous
and bold-fronted beast mars the symmetry of the
poetical sheep-idea. His independent bearing, his
courage in misfortune, spoil the woolly-silly-
picture. In the older verse the rams that
"fight for the rule of the rich-fleeced flock,"
and "meet so fierce with horned fronts," find a
robust and becoming sympathy, which is in ac-
cordance with the splendid traditions of the beast.

The ewe, the "mumbling" ewe, has but little
individuality. She is only the mother of the
lamb. Eagles stooping from their watch-towers
upon her young, wolves rushing from the bushes
upon the gambolling lambkins, the butcher levy-
ing his tribute from the flock, all relegate her to
obscurity. Take away her lamb, she vanishes into
nonentity. Give her another, and she reappears.
In nature the mother with her young is always
a delightful and loveable sight; and the charm is
often beautifully translated into verse. Thus in
Blomfield—

The teeming ewes, that still their burdens bear:
Beneath whose sides to-morrow's dawn may see
The milk-white strangers bow the trembling knee,
And at their birth the pow'ful instinct's seen
That fills with champions all the daisied green,
For ewes that stood aloof with fearful eye,
With stamping foot now men and dogs defy,
And obstinately faithful to their young
Guard their first steps to join the bleating throng.

The lamb, when not "prancing" and "gambol-
ling," is "witless" and "unconscious."

That the wolf should eat the lamb is therefore
one of that beast's most infamous points. It is
intolerable to the poets, and they are never
weary of denouncing the base assassination. They

admit the provocation which the lamb gives by
losing itself, by bleating loudly, by opening doors
which its mother had particularly cautioned it
to keep shut; but their indignation against the
murderer is none the less unmeasured and per-
sistent. Their lambs are innocent and white and
gentle; so the wolves that eat them are atrociously
guilty and unspeakably swarthy and grim. This
is the survival of the world's original myth.

Judged from any but a poet's standpoint, sheep
might almost be accounted the happiest and most
fortunate of animals. Death, after all, is the
universal lot; the grim policeman calls with his
summons upon each in turn. Not that sheep ever
seem to contemplate anything farther ahead than
their own noses. They are not troubled with
visions of cold mutton. But, with the poets, their
mildly-idiotic vacuity of face, their senseless imita-
tion of each other's actions, their shambling
evasion of anything like vigorous independence
for attack or self-defence, are interpreted into
innocence, docility, and meekness. Their timidity
is called gentleness. Thus invested with many
good qualities—those which specially engage the
poetic fancy—we find them perpetually besung
as a virtuous people whose lives are sadly
oppressed. Their constant nervousness, one of
the most absurd phenomena of animal life, is
excused on the ground that the events that cause
the alarm are arbitrary and brutal. Some tyrant
or another, a dog that barks or man with a gun,
rudely disturbs the happy calm of the gentle
sheep.

So it becomes the symbol of home-life, and its
peace. In the pet-lamb this idea reaches its ex-
treme expression, but the flocks in general con-
vey the same significance in a hundred different
ways. Their mere presence suffices to tranquilize
the scene, and, like some other sounds in nature,
their voices (as in Jean Ingelow) emphasize the
rural silence.

For sheep-bells chiming from a wold,
Or bleat of lamb within its fold,
Or cooing of love-legends old
To dove-wives makes not quiet less;
Ecstatic chirp of winged thing,
Or bubbling of the water spring,
Are sounds that more than silence bring
Itself and its delightsomeness.

Wordsworth hears in the bleat of the lamb on
the hill, "the plaintive spirit of the solitude."
Thomson is very fond of "the bleating moun-
tains,"* the "distant bleatings of the hills," as an
emblem of repose. The absence of sheep from the
landscape (as in Grahame) reminds the wanderer
in other lands of the happy tranquillity of "home."
The shepherd therefore "dwells with Peace," and
"the porch of his mossy cottage" is rendered more
touchingly home-like by the corner-stones on
either side being

With dull red stains discolour'd, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep
That fed upon the common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching place
Even at the threshold.

It follows therefore that every accidental asso-
ciation of sheep with stirring scenes or sounds of
the chase or war gives the poets a point of
strong contrast. So "the bleating flocks that

* So too we have with herds "lowing vales,"

along the bastion pass, and from the awful ruins, crop the grass," illustrates the peaceful meeting of generals to sign a truce upon their recent battle-field. The utterness of change is shown in Byron by sheep feeding on the lost site of Ilium's walls; and so too in Leyden,

Green waves the harvest, and the peasant boy
Stalls his rough herds within the towers of Troy;
Frowls the sly fox, the jackal rears her brood,
Where once the towers of mighty Ilium stood.

Though thus idealized as a genus, the various species are all punctually rendered. A poet's acquaintance with nature is not, as a rule, so extensive that he can afford to waste a variety of sheep. The "small black-legged sheep" that, "fleshless, lank, and lean," devour "the meagre herbage" of the Cambrian hills; the "goat-horned" animals "of fleece hairy and coarse, of long and nimble shank" that "browse their thinly-scattered meal o'er the bleak wilds" of the Cambrian—the Cotswold and the Southdown—"the larger sorts—of head defenceless"; the other

With horns Ammonian circulating twice
Around each open ear—like those fair scrolls
That grace the columns of Ionic domes,

and many another is specifically described, while the elaborate minuteness of Dyer's history of the Fleece—the ingredients that compose the soil, that grows the grass, that feeds the sheep, that gives the wool, that makes dyers rich, and ought to make England mistress of the world, is probably too well known for me to make any detailed reference here to that amazing abuse of poetical instinct and unique infelicity of choice of subject. But the poem, for such Akenside declares it to be, contains some delightful references to foreign sheep and shepherds, which are worth a passing notice. Having put the Indus in Cashmere, he calls the goats of the country sheep, and then, rambling off across Cathay, refers enraptured to the shepherd by "China's long canals," and so, coming round to the west, sees Mississippi "lengthen-on" her sheep-walks, and finally arrives in South America, where he speaks of the llama or the alpaca of Peru as

that sheep
Of fertile Arica, like camels joined,
Which bear huge burdens to the sea-beat shore
And shine with fleeces soft as feathery down.

But the whole poem is too pathetic in its vain struggle with the hopeless to be made fun of. There are lines and occasional passages of tolerable merit, but of the work, as a whole, Johnson's verdict on it will generally commend itself to the majority.

The value of our wool productions is, however, a frequently recurring point in verse; and though the old pastoral days are called "the unluxurious times of yore, when flocks and herds were no inglorious store," the possession of flocks is usually spoken of as an important factor in individual, local, and national wealth. "The fleecy produce of the Cotswold field shall equal what Peruvian mountains yield." The beauty of the wool itself comes often also under admiration, its whiteness and its softness exceeding indeed sometimes the poet's stock of simile and comparison. More than one even goes so far as to blame us for dyeing it, and to draw a moral of voluptuous luxury therefrom,

As the sheep are, so are the shepherds; creatures of a "witless" innocence, a feeble simplicity. Thus Parnell's—

Gaping, tender, apt to weep,
Their nature's altered by their sheep.

Or, again, in Spenser—

And meek he was, as meek might be,
Simple as simple sheep,
Humble and like in each degree
The flock which he did keep.

Indeed, "the cheerful tendance of the flocks" would hardly seem, from the poets' description of those who tend them, to conduce to much dignity of thought or intellectual occupation. They see them grazing, "with what a pure and simple joy"!

Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep;

and when they meet they have but a slender stock of intelligence to exchange.

But say, what news
Stirs in our sheep-walk?
None. Save that my ewes,
Wethers and lambs and wanton kids are well,
Smooth, fair and fat.

There are, however, two varieties of the shepherd. The first is the strictly poetical shepherd, "with his artless reed." This is Mallet's "rural king amid his subject flocks," who (Dyer) flutes to "charm his sheep" and (Otway) "pipeth to his feeding sheep." The other is the ordinary rustic, who lies about on the grass, and, when he is awake, gazes at his sheep and the landscape generally, and who has a dog to do all his work for him. A pleasing sub-variety, however, is "the blooming maid," who sometimes drives her flocks afield. Their queen is surely Lovelace's Chloris, that

Chloris, the gentlest shepherdess
That ever lambs or lawns did bless,

Country folk take omen and augury from so many beasts, birds, and plants, that it would be strange if sheep were exempt from prophetic functions, and not invested with prognostic powers.

When Blouzelind expir'd, the wether's bell
Before the drooping flock toll'd forth her knell,
The solemn deathwatch click'd the hour she dy'd,
And shrilling crickets in the chimney cry'd,
The boding raven on her cottage sate,
And with hoarse croak did warn us of her fate;
The lambkin, which her wonted tendance bred,
Dropp'd on the plains that fatal instant dead,
Swarm'd on a rotten stick the bees I spied,
Which erst I saw when Goody Dobson died.—(GAY.)

Certain noises are said to sicken the ewes; shrew-mice in the grass, newts in the water, are supposed to "blast" them. The poets take due cognizance of these superstitions; and the fauns and fairies who avert such disasters are becomingly admired. Of old-world fancies, Keats has beautifully preserved the following:—

Gloomy shades, sequester'd deep.
Where no man went; and if from shepherd's keep
A lamb stray'd far a-down those inmost glens,
Never again saw he the happy pens
Whither his brethren, bleating with content,
Over the hills at every nightfall went.
Among the shepherds 'twas believed ever,
That not one fleecy lamb which thus did sever
From the white flock, but pass'd unworried

By any wolf, or pard with prying head,
 Until it came to some unfooted plains
 Where fed the herds of Pan: ay, great his gains
 Who thus one lamb did lose.

This beautiful legend of Pan—"Harkener to the loud-clapping shears"—guarding the shepherd and his sheep, the cloud-flocks of the divinities, the golden fleece of Colchos, the strange shepherd-
 ing of Orpheus, "when lambs would scorn their food to hear his lay, and savage beasts stand by as tame as they," and many another fancy of a pastoral antiquity finds a place in our poets' verse; while the similes, analogies, morals, and metaphors from the sheep of classic or folk-lore individuality are innumerable. The Lamb of the Messiah, of Pentecost, of sacrifice, "the useful beast on Isaac's pile consumed," the flocks of David and of the shepherds of Bethlehem, afford again and again an image or a thought

A deceitful concubine, who shore me
 Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,

Una with her milk-white lamb, Joan of Arc with her crook, Don Quixote's army of Pentapolin.

Being thus prepossessed in favour of sheep, it is almost a natural sequence that the poets should be prejudiced against the goat, which is the moral antithesis of their favourite animal. Allan Ramsay's fable admirably illustrates this difference of sentiment. A ram "of upright, hardy spirit, Really a hornèd head of merit," who all summer and autumn through has led his family to abundant pastures, takes them, as winter comes on, "to crop contented frozen fare, With honesty, on hills blown bare." There he meets a goat who by his rascally trespassing upon fields and gardens has earned the hatred of all his neighbours, and who, anxious if possible to secure a friend, offers to give the ram some of his coat, which is close and intact, while the ram's, being torn by brambles, leaves his body half naked to the biting mountain-wind. But the sturdy old ram refuses.

"No," said he, "though my coat's torn,
 Yet ken, thou worthless, that I scorn
 To be oblig'd at any price
 To such as you, whose friendship's vice:
 I'd have less favour frae the best,
 Clad in a hateful hairy vest
 Bestow'd by thee, than as I now
 Stand but ill-drest in native woo'.
 Boons frae the generous make aye smile;
 From miscreants, make receivers vile."

THE WATERFALL.

ABOVE, the row of whispering poplars tall,
 Did giant shadows throw
 Upon a little, winding waterfall,
 That trickled down below.

I only saw the mud and slime that stopped
 The tiny, sluggish stream,
 The wet, dank, sodden autumn leaves, that
 dropped
 Ungilt by sunlit's gleam.

The child that held my hand rais'd her blue eyes,
 No sunshine there had fled;
 No cloud yet gathered o'er his azure skies,
 "How beautiful!" he said.

Ah! little dreamer, with the trustful smile
 That shadows could admire,
 That wore sweet fancies while I looked the while,
 To yon lone churchyard spire.

"How beautiful!" ah, beauty is the cloak
 We wrap round what we see;
 The dreams and visions by the hearts bespoke,
 To weave life's minstrelsy.

"How beautiful!" perchance our shadowed eyes
 Oft hide some beauty here;
 The fair green earth, the blueness of the skies,
 Is dimmed by one salt tear.

"Yes, beautiful," I answered, smiling back.
 Ah, who would break the spell?
 What matter if my heart chill sought the track,
 Its olden dreams to tell.

Yes, beautiful; the earth is cold enough,
 Without one shadow more;
 His childish feet will find the road but rough,
 Cast thou no stone before.

HOLLIS FREEMAN.

PASTEL:

A STUDY IN MONOCHROME.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON,
 Author of "Meadow Sweet," &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARTIST AND THE MAN.

PASTEL is a limner born; his soul is in his profession; art is his standpoint. When he takes his walks abroad he is ever on the look-out for "bits." His eyes are roving until an effect fascinates them. When they are caught, he becomes lost to everything else about him. Some street scene, some effect of sunlight, will cause his heart to jump, and arrest progress. Pedestrians may jostle him, he may be the oblivious centre of a gaping, though puzzled, crowd, swayed by the far-away look in his eyes, his abstracted gaze, to be charitable, if not pitiful. He may wake to all this, and not be confounded. He will meet the crowd's wonder with a smile and a drooping of the eyelids that has some humour in it, possibly he will have a joke that will rebound upon himself. He has no regard for appearances, or a thought for a companion who lives in awe of Mrs. Grundy. Patience and toleration must consequently, be the attributes of the adventurer who links his day's relief with Pastel's. A *fidus Achates* must wait good-temperedly until the artist's long-winded abstraction is over, and not take offence if Pastel's ear has been deaf to the good thing related. Nor must he become hipped if, when Pastel comes to himself, there is an abrupt demand for the gist of what has been said. Probably the minutes will have flown, and the speaker have forgotten his story, for Pastel's reveries are seldom of short duration. As Pastel has little regard for conventionalities, he has still less for clothes. The outer man never is with him a

matter of anxiety; he creeps into his habiliments day by day without a thought that cloth becomes threadbare, and that linen has a tendency to rend and fray. Yet his bearing and address denote unmistakably a well-bred person. He is courteous and refined, there is a kind of polish on his ideas, and his voice has such a tender modulation one never wearies of hearing him talk. And when he does talk, and his subject is one he has a predilection for, one's ears are not assaulted with a farrago of wearying, empty commonplaces, but titillated with some racy story full of tender humour or pathos, or informed with some recondite scrap of art history or experience. The cant of art is not in him; he has no platitudes that he may appear abstruse. Pastel knows as well as any man what ups and downs are, for no man has been more the sport of Fortune's battledore. And he has struggled manfully. When he does repine, it is only at the chaos of his youth, its want of direction, of thorough art training, of that careful supervision which projects a young man into the world, giving him, so to speak, a ten years' start of himself.

"There were no schools of art then, no paternal government," he will murmur. "I could draw from my infancy, but there was no eye to discover aptitude, or tongue to prophesy, or voice to insist, that I should be lifted out of the slough. I became a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. I thought when I was twenty I was getting on in the world, travelling with a circus, and painting startling masterpieces on their yellow vans."

But Pastel is not bitter; there is only a mournful ring in his voice, and few there are of us who do not wish that certain undirected or misdirected, and seemingly wasted, years could be lived over again. Perhaps we have to bewail neglected opportunities, or the grim poverty that held us back for so many weary cycles.

How difficult it is to give a pen-and-ink sketch of the man! In such an outline, the delineation of mind, the play of feature, and subtle light-of-the-eye baffle even the subservient hand. One can descend to describing the outer man, his appearance, and his clothes. The idea obtains that black velvet is the distinguishing mark of the artist, as tight nether garments denote the horsey man. But it is something of a delusion. Once the artist favoured the material, and very picturesque he looked in it, but in process of time no—no, other persons not artists began to ape the soft, shadowy pile and don the rakish soft felt, and the artist retired from the field. Pastel wears no velvet, no soft, slouchy hat. You may meet him occasionally in Regent Street or in Piccadilly, if that is your beat, and take him for a respectable bookish man, emancipated for a time, and determined to miss nothing of the life about him. His dark eyes are bright, though not piercing; they have that soft, melting expression peculiar to the children of the sunny South. Indeed, he has been taken for "an Italian, but he preferred to be an Englishman." They are dreamy eyes, but they light up with a twinkle of gaiety if they chance to rest upon an intimate. At home, Pastel doffs the ancient frock coat for a long gown with a strap, the gown fashioned something like a priest's cassock, the silk hat—to be honest, of rusty hue—giving place to a skull-

cap, for Pastel is quite bald, all his hair, with the exception of a fringe at the nape, flourishing luxuriously on the lower part of his face. It is a beard. He has scarcely age enough, or he would pose as a patriarch; he requires no making up for an astrologer. Though an assiduous toiler, his manner is not brisk; there is a lazy, dilatory air in all his movements, and it is easy to see that he is not one to strike while the iron is hot, and that he will be prone to shelve his work, be it ever so important, if a congenial spirit drops in unawares. Consequently, it will not surprise the reader if Pastel is acknowledged to be far from rich, and that there are other men ranking higher in the profession. Pastel has indulged too much in day-dreams; his mind has dwelt too hopefully on Croesus days; he has had the brightest imaginings of his future. His hands were open, and his pocket at any one's command. He has lived long enough to be corrected of such weakness, for no man has bitten more at the bridle. But he has relapses; whenever dull care is away, he dreams. To look at his singularly mild and pleasing physiognomy, one is assured that generosity is a prominent trait, and also that he is one naturally averse to bestirring himself until funds have ebbed. Fortunately, he has a wife at his elbow who has foresight, or it is to be feared that commissions would often go elsewhere, in spite of Pastel's talent and conscientious work. The fact is, Pastel is something like the blacksmith who would spend half a day repairing a fractions lock for nothing rather than attend to the shoeing of a horse, which would pay him well for his time. Pastel always has to be driven to a commission, while a sketch that can never be utilized, or bring him in any return, will be a labour of love. The wife spurs him on, bringing into sight a certain number of olive branches. But the worst said about Pastel, he has no faults—failings he may have, one of them (I say it as an aggrieved person) is allowing that little woman to henpeck him as she does, without, on his part, a word of remonstrance. She would have him pursue the even tenour of work-a-day way, without any relaxation whatever. Happily, he escapes her vigilance sometimes, and appears where artists and that ilk most do congregate.

CHAPTER II.

A "TALK."

I HAD not seen Pastel for an age, for I had been enduring a mild kind of transportation, acting as special to the *Earwigger*. I was abroad over a year and a half, and when I returned had to do duty in the provinces reporting popular feeling in a certain quarter. When I returned to town I was still too busy to look up old acquaintance; when I had leisure I felt indisposed for voyages of discovery, and unless one has great determination, when one subsides into such a vein, the weeks and months glide by, adding increment to the feeling of procrastination. I had inquired after Pastel, and learned that he had changed his *venue*; then when I gained his address there came to me the information that the artist had struck his tent and marched again. Pastel was lost to me. Of course I could have obtained his

location by interviewing the editor of the *Mountebank*, for whom Pastel furnishes weekly the satirical cartoon. I thought about calling in at the office *en passant*, but the thought went out of my head as suddenly as it entered it. But as chance would have it, who should I meet that very afternoon but Pastel himself, wandering somewhat melancholily, it struck me, in unsavoury purlieus about Hatton Garden. I certainly was surprised to meet him where I did, and the expression he carried caused me to feel a little concerned for him. Was Pastel down on his luck? He did not recognize me at the first glance; for I had altered more than he. I am a much younger man than Pastel; a year or two had changed the character of the down upon my upper lip, and I had increased in bulk. But Pastel only hesitated a moment; my voice betrayed me, and he answered my question by asking another precisely similar.

"Oh," I answered, "you need not be surprised to find 'our own correspondent' in shady haunts. But, Pastel," added I, "you are not looking so well."

"Think not—ah, my health is good," he replied evasively; "I won't echo you there. If it is a fair question, Lawless, what have you on hand?"

"Well," I confided to him, "times are dull with us; it is the recess: there is absolutely nothing to record, nothing sensational stirring anywhere, so we specials are reduced almost to the status of liners. We must have matter, if it be great cry and little wool. We are contemplating the enlightenment of the British public on matters near home."

"My dear fellow, why shouldn't I also try new ground? There are charming studies to be met with in the most unlikely localities. But I am returning. My wife is out; I have been taking advantage of her absence, I must confess. I don't expect her home until to-morrow. Return with me; over a cigar we can have a talk; it will do me a power of good. I have been working hard lately, and I felt so fagged I thought a little relaxation in the shape of a brisk walk would be a good tonic. Cooped up from morning until night, when one does come out one feels like a bat facing daylight."

I looked at my watch, assenting after a moment's cogitation. It was hard to deprive Pastel of a relief. I was young, midnight and a towel-swathed head and the *Earwigger* would duly receive its copy. But it is not pleasant taking one's pleasure or ease with conscience whispering of neglected duty. One cannot have true enjoyment. The sense of culpability damps a natural *gaieté de cœur*: hilarity is forced. If one forgets in the flowing bowl and the smoke-wreaths of choice tobacco the personality of one's gnome, one exists as a criminal under deferred sentence.

As we went along Pastel was unusually attentive to my desultory talk, though his eyes were continually roving as if expectant that some face he had counted upon catching would reward his diligence. He gave me the impression that so far his stolen pleasure was as yet only bitter in his mouth. But he talked and replied lucidly and to the point, which is not always a marked feature with him. When we reached his domicile, not half an hour's walk from the Law Courts, Pastel took a lingering look about him before knocking. We had turned out of a main thoroughfare into a bye-street, and I became aware that Pastel's castle

was over a huge shop, the windows of his rooms having a north but pleasant outlook upon the busier street. The door was opened by a charming little cherub of a girl, whose face illumines many an admirable woodcut. We mounted a flight of stairs and traversed a long wainscotted passage. The house was evidently one of old memories. When we were fairly in his den, Pastel tenderly solicited the little maid to leave us to ourselves—indeed she did not require twice telling. I could hear in the little back room other children's voices, and I concluded that she only shared the paternal affection. The room wherein we sat served, I could see, as refectory as well as studio. What a room it was! Lofty and of fair proportions, and well lighted. But its condition! Turn in an old maid with a pious proclivity to that virtue which is next to godliness, a mania for order and a hatred of dust, she would uplift her hands in frantic horror, in her dismay need a strait waistcoat, probably escape vigilance, and conclude with a theatrical header through one of the large open windows. Magazine literature, illustrated newspapers and serials, encumbered every table, with any amount of dust upon and among them. Old canvasses, millboards, portfolios, pictures commenced never to be completed, daded the walls. There was *matériel* in the shape of wood blocks, easels and other *impedimenta*. A lay figure was utilized as a hat-rail. Plaster casts too abounded; Ceres bereft of her horn; the Dancing Girls, their limbs fractured and reset with dark cement; Venus, her nose affected by an accident or the weather; other torso, other figures as interesting, but all more or less impotent. Nevertheless there was a charm in all this gracelessness and disorder. Pastel gave me a chair, an amused twinkle in his eye.

"I unfortunately was a little thoughtless the other day, when one of my best patrons called upon me. I allowed him to seat himself, the chair was a little rickety, and he being a heavy man went through. He was fast as in a trap, and he was not extricated easily."

"Then you have nearly discarded the brush, Pastel," I ventured looking about me.

"Quite, I may say," replied he. "Circumstances, not inclination, have carried me into another current. But it is not for me to complain," he added, rousing himself, as I fancied from a tendency to sink into gloomy despondency. "I am glad to have met with you, Lawless; I have wondered many times what you were doing. I thought if you had gone over to the majority there would have been some intimation. Correspondents following an army run some risk, I should say. It is like old times to have you sitting opposite me. Ah, when your book came out—how is it that you have never ventured with another?—but perhaps you have. I do run my eye through the publishers' lists occasionally, and I have looked out for your *nom de plume*, but I have failed to see it in them."

Why enter into a recapitulation of the stupidity of the British public in not discerning merit? In spite of my novel receiving some remarkable good criticism, readers were biassed with the adverse views of certain spiteful journals. The *Trunchoon* went out of its way to knock me down. I can only imagine the reviewer's digestion was impaired. My book fell dead. A comparison of my publisher's first sanguine note and his de-

spondent last one is not quite beyond me. Mildly I can compare them to August's heat and January's frost.

"Oh," I smiled wintrily, replying to Pastel. "I wrote myself out, I think." It was a mendacious assertion.

Pastel shook his head remonstratively, and I felt that I was a self-contained humbug, having at the moment two novels on hand only waiting opportunity. Stories that would transfix novel devourers, with proper judgment exercised in the slicing-out into instalments.

"Well, Pastel," I went so far as to say apologetically, feeling that I owed him a little more honesty, "three-deckers take up time, and one has to wait for results sometimes; now a Staff engagement brings one in a certain income. Possibly you have a similar answer for taking to the wood."

"Ye—es," he answered with dreamy attention.

"But those oils hanging there strike me as out of place. You ought not to have them upon your hands. They are new to me; at least, I have no recollection of ever having seen them before. They have been painted, have they not, since last I filled your room with my presence?"

"Yes; they have been painted now some few years," Pastel returned with sad interest. "They have their history like everything else."

Pastel's manner led me to infer that conversation or inquiries anent them was *de trop*, so I pressed him no further. Our talk eventually drifted to the irrecoverable past, and Pastel got in full retrospective swing. He went back to his boyhood; he touched upon his earliest bias towards art, his first marriage, his setting up as portrait painter, his failures to make ends meet and tie.

"And no wonder," he cried, with a burst of merriment; "my portraits did not satisfy me; now, I should be afraid to have them brought up as ghastly witnesses to confront me. I believe they were all meritorious as gross caricatures."

Pastel became quite cheerful as other comical episodes in his career at that time occurred to him.

"One laughs at the recollection of the sorry plights one has been reduced to. Fancy painting a farmer's portrait for a sack of corn! Those were utilitarian days. I thought it was not impossible to convert it into flour. But fancy attempting to carry it home! But I had a coadjutor, I remember. We had four or five miles to walk though, and agreed to take the sack by turns. But before we had traversed the first field we began to question our ability. At the first gate the sack fell, and we found that readjustment, the proper distribution of weight, were factors of the achievement. We returned to the farmer, who met us with a laugh. He had expected our discomfiture. He was a good fellow, cheerfully promising to deliver it first journey to market. But portrait-painting, if dismal perpetuating rubicund features to posterity, is superior to the *silhouette* business in which I was once engaged. Now that is a black and dirty business, involving petty rogues as well as lamp-black and scissors. Fancy having a stock, all cut out beforehand, and making a selection for the sitter. There are only a certain number of type of noses. There were few occasions when the subject might have saved himself the trouble of his bland smile or simper. But what in those days was I not compelled to—to keep the pot a-boiling. I hear these fellows now-a-days

say—'Oh, I'm not going to paint pot-boilers, to have them brought up against me; I have too much veneration for my art!' Fiddlesticks! Either they have means, or they are hypocrites, and doing it all the while. The artist, the poet, the novelist can no more live on air than other human beings. But to return; when photography came up, I thought it was all over with second-rate and third-rate brushes, and had I had the necessary capital I really do believe that I should have invested in a van and peregrinated the country."

"You are still on the fidget about those pictures! Why, Lawless, there is not much of a history concerning them, if I did say so. Though it affected me it may be of little interest to any one else, I felt disinclined to talk about them a moment ago, but perhaps I am more in the vein, one's mood changes. Ah!" Pastel sighed, "you remember my unfortunate engagement to furnish a gallery, a melodramatic affair throughout. The pictures were all melodramatic, the man was, though one worthy, still a charlatan. No, I will not yet believe the worst of him. He was not niggardly, he was the comet of a season. I perhaps did count too much upon his stability. I am not one given to suspect people. Like hosts of others I had not the prescience to foresee that a rapidly built-up house of cards must topple over. I don't think yet that he thought he was to fall. It was unexpected pressure that did it. But what a dilemma I was in! I had given up all my engagements to give my whole time to those mammoth canvasses. I was counselled to make myself scarce for a time and rusticate. I returned with a few pounds in my pockets, due to packing up a few requisites for landscape painting. Janet had just got to the end of her tether—purse, I should say. Janet had been panic-stricken at my disappearance I learned, but my note reassured her, she grasped the necessity there was for my conduct. I was better out of the way until I could meet clamorous creditors. The few pounds we had were a crab in a coal-pit. She talked them over; I had an engagement in the country; for they came round like a swarm of bees when the news reached them that the greater man had bolted. When I reached London I went round and spoke fairly and paid as far as my money would go. Then I returned home with the firm resolution of working hard, determining to give way to no kind of nonsense, fully sensible that I must not fritter away time. I did work hard, and denied myself a moment's leisure. I painted carefully, using my best judgment, taking pains in the smallest detail. Janet looked on, troubled and disconsolate. When I said:—'We'll try the Academy again, Jinny!' she looked more despairing still. She knew that I had always been turned away. But I toiled on, and when my three pictures were done, I sent them on with a confidence that they would be accepted that approached certainty. Oh yes, I had been confident before, and had had to meet with disappointment. But I may say that I had a supernatural faith; I had dreamed over and over again that they were hung, and once in my dream that I was refused to view them. Odd wasn't it? It would have been impossible to shake my faith."

"And those were the three?" escaped me in spite of myself. I rose to inspect them more carefully.

"No, no, my dear fellow. My poor little model," he sighed retrospectively, following me with his eyes.

"Were the pictures you speak of rejected then?" I asked, dropping into my chair.

"No, certainly not," returned Pastel, a little impatiently; "now, do let me tell my story in my own way. Or stay, you show a spirit of acquisitiveness, is it that you require a little story for a mag.—may I make use of this little morsel from the studios—eh? There is little in it, Lawless, and I give you fair warning that I have told the story of 'how I was hung at the Academy.'"

"Proceed, Pastel, don't heed me," I said propitiatingly; "I am precipitate, I know."

(To be continued.)

FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

A COUNTRY SKETCH.

BY J. E. PANTON.

DESOLATE and deserted as Windyholm looked to the ordinary tourist, it appeared to Lucy Venner as a very haven of refuge when she drove up to the hospitable door of the farm, after her long and toilsome journey from London, one lovely September evening.

True she came accompanied by three anxieties in the shape of three most riotous pupils; but she had not nursed them all through scarlet-fever for nothing, and she still retained the influence over them obtained then, and to which was owing, under Providence, said the doctor, the fact that they were yet in the land of the living, and so she looked joyfully forward to her holidays at the farm, where they came to be received,—until free from the very smallest infection, and able to mix once more with their fellow-creatures.

Old Mrs. Lorimer, their hostess, was, she said, fever-proof; while Ralph Lorimer, her only child, had had the complaint years ago, and as to the farm-servants, why Mrs. Lorimer had the curious lack of dread of infection, that almost amounts to fatalism, that is found in so many country-bred dames, and feared nothing for them, preferring to believe that they had all had it, or else were, like herself, quite fever-proof. As she awaited the arrival of her guests, under the quaint thatched porch that faced the setting sun, she looked quite like an ideal mistress of a farm, only anxious to give of her best, a foretaste of which should certainly be forthcoming in her welcome.

"It's like paradise, after Bloomsbury," said Lucy, coming out into the barton at the back of the house to have a glimpse of the sea with the moonlight on it; "how good of you to let us come here, dear Mrs. Lorimer; you can't tell how thankful we were when your letter arrived, saying you would have us. Was it not curious that the children's grandfather should have remembered after all these years? How comfortable you made him, when he was laid up here. He said if only Bata Lorimer would take us in, we should be in clover, and he was quite right; but he didn't know you were married, and was astonished to hear that you had Mr. Ralph for a son."

"He has a short memory for some things," said Mrs. Lorimer smiling sadly; "but thirty-three years is a long time too, Miss Venner, and it is thirty-three years this March since I saw Mr. Mackenzie climb that hill after Ralph's christening and disappear. He was Mr. Mackenzie then, but Lord Glasgow soon died, and he came into the title, and married. Why, your Mr. Mackenzie must be thirty-one only: young indeed to be the father of those big children."

"Mrs. Mackenzie often says he is nothing but a boy himself, and that she has five children, counting him in," answered Lucy smiling. "How dull the big house will seem with only baby left. I'm thankful he escaped the fever, he is such a dear, frail little soul, and the image of his grandfather. Do you remember Lord Glasgow's forehead and eyes, Mrs. Lorimer, they are rather like Mr. Ralph's, I think, from what I saw at tea—very blue eyes, and black lashes, and a broad forehead with the veins showing plainly."

"My dear, how could my son's face be like Lord Glasgow's?" said Mrs. Lorimer smiling; "don't mention such a thing again, for goodness sake; he is a dear, good boy, and a regular farmer, and Lord Glasgow, with his foolish weak face, is not worthy of holding a candle to him. Ah! Miss Venner, few people know what a clever fellow Ralph is. I must show you his books, rows upon rows, from his school prizes to those he bought with his first earnings; the only wonder I have is where he puts all his knowledge. Now you are fresh from London, and from a literary household. I want you to be very friendly with Ralph, and tell him how Mr. Mackenzie writes all his books. I'm sure Ralph could do as well himself, if only he knew how to set about it. Oh, Ralph!" she added, as she saw her son's tall figure in the gloom of the September evening, "that's right, work is over now, come and talk to Miss Venner, she must have plenty to tell you about the things you care most to hear of—I'm going in. The mist is rising a little, and fifty-four, you know, is bound to be careful." And so saying she turned away, leaving her son and the little governess standing together in the stack-yard or barton, where the ingathered harvest was standing in serried rows of golden stacks, looking weird and ghostlike in the sea-mist that had risen.

"Are you not afraid of the damp, too?" asked Ralph, "if not, I should like to take you up Church Hill, to see the sea and our valley; a night like this is too lovely to spend in mother's parlour. I didn't like to press her to come, for the best view is from my father's grave, and a visit there always upsets her. One would think such an out-of-the-way place as this was free from tragedies or even comedies, Miss Venner, but it is not; we have adventures even here, and my father's death was as tragic as if he'd lived in the midst of the whirl." Then seeing Lucy look at him, as if rather astonished at this premature disclosure, he added with a smile:—"I never saw my father, and as 'foully murdered' is on the grave-stone, I am not breaking any confidence. Well! the man was hanged in Dorchester gaol, I'm glad to say, and died, protesting his sorrow that he had shot the wrong man in mistake—my father was curiously like Mr. Mackenzie—of whom doubtless he was some distant connection, as they both came from Scotland, and the bullet that made me

fatherless was meant for his lordship, and my mother never got over the blow. See, here is the grave; turn your back to it, Miss Venner, and tell me is not that better than all the busy whirl of London town?"

After leaving the barton, the pair had gradually ascended a sticky clay hill, until reaching the churchyard; they stood some distance above the hollow where the farm lay, and which was now filled with a soft, white downy fog, that floated beneath them, leaving the tops of the hills quite free from the mist; on the left hand lay the sea, that could be heard murmuring below the cliff, while on the right another range of hills stood between the farm and the tiny walled-in country town, where the train had deposited Lucy and her charges in the afternoon; here and there a dull light would be seen through the fog, indicating the presence of other lonely houses; occasionally a gull would flap along heavily towards his home in the cliff, or a browsing sheep in the churchyard would move uneasily; but the silence was intense, and there might have been only those two people in the world for any other sign there was of human beings. Indeed there was positively none, save that afforded by the long graves in the untidy graveyard, and as Lucy saw the words on the stone indicated to her by Ralph Lorimer, she could hardly realize the sense of anguish and bygone agony that they appeared to her to represent.

She shuddered, and turned back once more to the mists and peace of the valley.

"The folk about here believe those mists are the souls of all who have been thrust hurriedly out of life," said Ralph; "that they are thus permitted to revisit the earth, and fulfil the term for which they were placed here. It is a curious idea, is it not, but we are curious people. You are cold, Miss Venner. Come, let us be children, and run home; even my mother's paraffin lamp will be preferable to this, if you intend to take a chill, as they call it, in these parts."

And so saying he took Lucy's small, cold hand in his, and ran with her down the hill, landing her at the farmhouse door in a dripping condition as regards the feathers in her hat, but otherwise unharmed, if a little unstrung by the curious string of incidents unfolded to her.

But a good night's rest, and the perfect sunshine that poured in at her dimity-draped window, caused her very soon to forget everything save breakfast, her charges, and the beautiful sea-coast that was to yield them all so much health and pleasure.

I am aware that in stating that Dorsetshire is one of the most picturesque of our English counties, I run the risk of being flatly contradicted by those to whom she is nothing save barren and unprofitable heath-land, and who do not know aught beyond the bare surface of the country. To know and appreciate Dorset you must undoubtedly have lived there, then and then only will you learn the marvellous colouring, the ever-changing face that is hers only, and then will she disclose those secrets of the haunts of birds and wild flowers that she keeps most jealously from those who only give her a cursory glance, and leave her contemptuously on one side.

This is but a simple true sketch of a year in a man's life, and I must not dilate on the Dorset

scenery; but Lucy Venner— orphan daughter of a London curate—fell desperately in love with the county, which she saw at its very best in September, and would not say no when Ralph Lorimer laid his home and heart at her feet, and begged her to stay for life where she had had such a happy month. Ralph, who had been buried in his books, who had passed scatheless through the battery of fine eyes turned on him every time he went to Windyholm Church or visited Dulverton market, had fallen desperately in love with Lucy, whose familiarity with literature, and whose fine breeding and polish, engendered by mixing with people whose standard was formed on the basis of knowledge and not on mere monetary worth, appeared to him far more valuable than rubies, and as something almost too precious to be given into the care of a mere rough Dorset farmer.

Lucy herself had no *arrière pensée*, to be liberated from teaching and to be loved, to be given a sweet home in pure air, seemed to her the acme of good luck, and she plighted her troth to Ralph gratefully, affectionately; and only astonished that she experienced none of the mysterious rapture and bliss that she had expected would be hers when she felt Ralph's arm round her and his kiss upon her lips.

Mrs. Lorimer, thankful to hear of Ralph's happiness, and well enough off not to trouble in the least over Lucy's lack of fortune, had her own misgivings that fount words. When she and Lucy were alone one night, just a fortnight before the wedding was to come off in London, from the Mackenzies' house, she said—

"My dear, I want to tell you a story, it is a very short one, and one you must never repeat; but I fear you do not love Ralph, really, and I wish to warn you before too late. Much as my boy loves you, I'd rather see him miserable now than live the tortured existence of one who has learned all too late, that his wife has no heart to give him. Nay, don't interrupt me, dear," she added, as she saw Lucy was about to protest against the idea that she did not love her future husband, "I have known what love is, and you have not. My story is very short, and I should never have told it, only to save my boy.

"Thirty-five years ago Mr. Mackenzie came here to sketch, and falling ill in our house, was nursed by my mother and myself like a son or a brother would have been; he gave me soft words and looks of love, and like a fool I gave him all my heart. That was love, Lucy. Why, the mere tones of his voice thrilled me, as Ralph's kisses even do not move you—while the touch of his hand—ah! how foolish I was in those days: how foolish and how happy.

"I can hardly believe that I look on the same hills on which he and I walked together; that I am the same creature who sat for hours in that window looking for him. Well, it is an old story, Lucy; he never really loved me, and went away promising to return and dance at my wedding with Aubrey Lorimer, who had loved me for years, and who I might have loved too, had he never come across my path. I told Aubrey all, Lucy. I used to be fond of him: he was so like Mr. Mackenzie; and yet he married me, though I could never give him my heart. But he was so patient, so good, I could only pray that he might never know how I began to hate him when I found

he had a right to my kisses, and could enforce my love—love—ah! my old blood boils now when I think of those days.

"Lucy, I was thankful when he died; thankful he left me before he learned how I began to feel towards him. And I would rather see Ralph dead too, than know he had to live his life like his father must have done, had the bullet spared him."

"But, dear Mrs. Lorimer," said Lucy, trembling at her vehemence, "I have never loved any one. I am sure, really, truly sure, I am very fond of Ralph."

"I am foolish, I know;" said Mrs. Lorimer, wiping her eyes. "But, Lucy, you don't love my boy. This life appears fresh and pleasant to you now; but remember the long years of dullness that will be yours. Society represented by our neighbours, the Smalls; literature by the books and papers that so rarely reach here; no bright talk—nothing, save nature, Ralph and myself."

"I will face them all," said Lucy; "only love me, and teach me to love Ralph and do my duty, and I am sure we shall all be very happy."

"Please God!" said Mrs. Lorimer, kissing Lucy's little eager face; "anyhow, we'll hope for the best."

But when Lucy had fairly settled down as Mrs. Ralph Lorimer, she began to wonder whether she had not, after all, made a fearful mistake. The deep winter snows came on; hard frost kept them prisoners even from church; and when rare letters or papers came to the farm, Lucy could not help regretting fiercely—savagely—the warmth and life and cheerful clever talk that she never knew how much she depended on until it was taken from her.

To get up, to go to bed, to try and read Ralph's books all about the genesis of species and geology—never to have a new novel, or a gossip about the theatres—it seemed, indeed, a maddening existence, and if less strong-minded than her mother-in-law, she could not help letting a little of her feelings show. A glance from Mrs. Lorimer's eyes, or a pained look on Ralph's face, soon caused her to retract her selfish speech, or hasty sigh, and made her retreat more and more into herself.

She was dull, dreadfully dull, and she did not love her husband.

Mrs. Lorimer hoped that the next winter would be better. Lucy loved children; there would be a child at the farm with the next Christmas roses.

Dear reader, this is only a sketch, a true sketch; with the snow came a winding sheet for Lucy; a drunken country doctor, a bad nurse hurriedly fetched from Dulverton, and all was over; and the Christmas roses lay on Lucy's heart, with the tiny infant who was to have done so much; and who never even opened her eyes on the white world that lay around the farm when she was born!

It is more than twenty years since Lucy died; and the farm looks just as it used. Mrs. Lorimer has often urged Ralph to leave and mix in the world that would welcome him even now so gladly; he says he has lived his life, and has had more happiness in his one short year of marriage than falls to the lot of most men in their whole lives, and that he loves the farm, and the dear old churchyard where all he loved lies buried, and so they live now a little greyer, a little older, but content, even though their neighbours cannot

make them out, and never could understand all the latent tragedies that have made Ralph and his mother distinct from the ordinary run of country people, who take life as a matter-of-course, as a rule, and rather enjoy misfortunes because they form a fund of conversation when days are dull.

A stranger could not pass Ralph Lorimer and not notice his distinctive appearance, the something that stamps him as a gentleman; and while his mother puts it down to his love of books, and thanks heaven that he never found out what his wife really felt in her married life, he says that he is different because of the intense happiness that was his for only so short a while.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever;" "Juliet's Guardian;" "Pure Gold;" "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

"LOVE v. MONEY."

DINNER was over at Lanfrew. The ladies were rising from the table. A silver moon shone on the quiet world outside, and lit up the smooth lawn with its cool soft light.

"What a lovely night!" said Mrs. Barrington, as they passed out of the dining-room.

"How I should like a breath of fresh air!" murmured Violet, who was the last, and she gave a swift flash of her grey eyes up into David Lennard's face as he stood holding the door open for her to pass out. Mrs. Barrington and Janet went on into the drawing-room, and took out their work. Violet fidgeted up and down restlessly for a few minutes. Then she slipped away into the hall, and presently as no one seemed to notice her absence, she opened the door and stole out into the garden. There was a shady shrubby walk to the left of the house, well screened from the windows, a row of high evergreens on one side of it, and a bower of sweet briar on the other, and at one place the path widened, and the stone basin of a tiny fountain shone cold and bright in the moonlight. Up and down this walk Violet paced impatiently for some minutes; wondering whether David Lennard would take her hint and come out there to meet her. Presently she heard the crunch of footsteps on the gravel-walk; from beneath the deep shadow of the evergreens a man was coming towards her. She stood still waiting for him with a strangely beating heart.

"Violet!"

And almost before he spoke she knew that it was Kit Barrington. He stood before her, holding out both hands to her, but she turned away from him trembling. Once again those two were alone in the solitude of a summer night, with only the dark star-flecked heavens above them. The witchery of the moonlight hour was upon them both. Once again the worst part of the girl's nature died within her, and her better self alone was left. She forgot her worldly schemes, her avarice, her paltry ambition, her greed of wealth;

she forgot everything but the man who was with her, and that she loved him.

"Violet, my little darling!" and this time the tender words were whispered in her ear, for the fair gold brown head lay on his shoulder, and his arms were around her. So they stood for some minutes in a silence more eloquent than words—stood in the deep shadow of the trees, with the pale hazy moonlight all around them, in the first rapture of a new spoken love, than which there is no greater joy in heaven or earth.

"Why have you been so cruel to me, Violet?" asked Kit at last, as he kissed her soft lips for the twentieth time.

"I—I have been trying so hard not to like you," said Violet.

"Silly little woman! But you have not been able to succeed in those amiable efforts?"

"Indeed, I must not allow myself to like you too much. I have never said I like you at all," she stammered, drawing herself back a little from his arms.

"I don't want you to say so," he answered, trying to bring her head back again on to his shoulder; but Violet was recovering her senses.

"You know we can never be married, so what is the use of all this?" she said.

"Why not?"

"We have no money either of us."

"And so you are afraid of being a poor man's wife, Violet?" This time the spell was broken, and she shook herself completely free from her lover's arms.

"It would be simple madness," she said seriously. "Please let us forget this—this foolish evening. We can never be anything to each other. Let me go in."

"Wait a bit, Violet. You are always wanting to forget the little scenes which pass between us. Let us discuss this subject seriously. I am not such a pauper as you seem to suppose. I have a few hundreds of my own, not much, certainly, but enough to keep you, my darling; and my uncle would do something for us, I know. You have not been extravagantly brought up, dearest, and I am willing to give up everything in the world for you. We should do very well, Violet. I think you are made for a poor man's wife, my little darling."

Here Violet stamped her foot angrily. "You are talking nonsense!" she cried; "The thing is impossible, and you know it is! You talk of giving up everything for me, how do you know what I should have to give up for you?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

But Violet was thinking of David Lennard's possible thousands a year, and would not answer.

"You are not going to make difficulties, my little wife?"

"I will not be your wife," she answered angrily.

"And yet you love me, Violet!"

She did not answer. They had begun to walk on together towards the house.

"How do you know that—that I love you?" she asked at last.

"How do I know? By this, and this, and this!" he caught her again to his breast, and kissed her passionately on her cheeks and eyes and lips till she was half frightened by his violence.

"You cannot refuse my love; you know you can't."

"Leave me till to-morrow morning to decide," she whispered, the better part of her nature again alive within her.

"Very well. You will meet me here again at half-past eight, before breakfast?"

She nodded assent.

"Then I will leave you now. Good-night, and God bless you."

He turned away and left her, and Violet went on alone to the house. Her cheeks were still on fire, her heart was still beating, her whole being was trembling still from the memory of Kit Barrington's kisses, when she nearly ran up against David Lennard, who was coming swiftly out of the house to look for her.

"Miss Clayton, I thought I should never get away; old Barrington kept me there talking about the wrongs of the agricultural labourer till I have been driven half frantic. Come back and have a turn in the garden with me."

"Not now, I am cold."

"I have brought out a shawl for you. Do come, only for five minutes."

"Don't you think Mrs. Barrington will miss me?" demurred Violet, for the good was still uppermost in her.

"No, she is fast asleep over her book. Do come! only for five minutes. I won't keep you longer."

She stood still hesitating, debating, doubting, the good and evil fighting within her for the mastery, and then at last the evil had the best of it.

"Very well; only five minutes, remember!" she said rather faintly, and she turned and disappeared with him into the shadowy garden.

CHAPTER VIII.

JANET'S STORY.

HALF-AN-HOUR later Violet Clayton crept back alone into the house through the open library window, with dark circles round her eyes, with a scared, white, guilty look on her fair face, and with a hoop of flashing diamonds sparkling on the third finger of her left hand. Passing quickly along the passage towards her own room, she stumbled against some one coming to meet her.

"Violet, I want to speak to you."

"Not now, Janet. I am tired; I am going to bed."

"Then I will come into your room while you undress. I must speak a few words to you, dear," added Janet very gently, as she followed the girl into her room.

Violet quickly slipped her ring into her pocket, and then lit the candles.

"What is it, Janet? Make haste, for I am very sleepy," she said, yawning to hide her agitation and nervousness.

Janet Maxwell put her arm affectionately round the younger girl's waist.

"Violet, I am afraid you may be angry with me for what I have to say, but I was upstairs just now and I saw you walking up and down the laurel walk with Kit Barrington—hush, don't interrupt me. I don't know what he was saying to you, but I can guess. And I do most solemnly

warn you against allowing that man to speak any words of love to you."

"Who ever said that he has? You have no right to accuse me of such a thing," cried Violet angrily, shaking off the arm that was round her.

"I hope he has not—I hope I am mistaken; but I am fond of you, Violet, and I will not let you be taken in by that bad man as—as I was," she added almost in a whisper.

"What do you mean?" cried Violet sharply.

There was a little pause before Janet spoke again.

"It is very painful to me to tell you of this part of my story," she said at last, "but it is best for you that I should. Two years ago, Violet, I used to walk up and down that shrubbery walk where I saw you and him to-night, evening after evening. There it was that he swore that he loved me—his words and his caresses, I can never speak of them, but they are burnt into my memory for ever. He bound me over to keep our engagement a secret, which I easily promised to do, because he was poor and I was rich, and of course, there would have been opposition to our marriage. And then he went away, and at that time I used every effort, and, indeed, I may say that for the time I succeeded, in persuading my uncle and aunt that I would never marry David. Short of betraying my secret, I did and said everything I could, both to him and to them, to put an end to that affair altogether; and Kit went away."

"Yes, and then?" said her listener eagerly.

"And then a whole year passed. I wrote to him almost every day, and he wrote to me at first about once a week, but his letters soon got fewer and fewer, and were very short and hurried scraps when they did come; still I trusted him, for he had seemed so fond of me, and his loving words still echoed in my heart, till one day—it was about this time last year—a letter came to uncle at breakfast; shall I ever forget it! Poor Kit, it said, had got into another scrape; he had all but run off with a great heiress, a Miss Mackenzie, who had, it was said, ten thousand a year. The runaway couple had already started when the angry father pounced down on them and rescued his daughter, who was only seventeen, and carried her home again."

Violet was by this time kneeling down by Janet's chair, and trembling in every limb.

"And you?" she asked, below her breath.

"And I? Why need I tell you any more? I bore it as best I could—as one has to bear these sorts of troubles—in silence. I have met Kit Barrington many times since then in London and elsewhere. It was, I think, particularly cruel of him to come and stay here; but you see that I meet him as an ordinary acquaintance. With my wounded pride to help me I have gradually made up my mind to marry David Lennard. But though I mean to be his wife, and shall, I have no doubt, be very happy by-and-by, still, Violet, you will think me weak—though I despise Kit Barrington heartily—still there are times when he is with me, when his voice is lowered as it used to be, when his eyes meet mine—there are times when I feel that I love him still, and shall love him to the end of my life—my life which his falseness has made so miserable!" She was silent, and covered her face with her hands. And Violet, kneeling by her with her hand on her knee, felt that she

hated her with the whole strength of her being. Anger, rage, jealousy, wounded love, all rose up in the girl's heart in one wild storm, and she realized in one moment that her love for this man, whose baseness had just been revealed to her, was an intense reality utterly beyond her own control.

"Can you wonder, Violet, that I should wish to save you from him?" asked Janet presently.

"You forget one thing, Janet," she answered in a voice that shook with passion, "that you and I are different—I am penniless. If Mr. Barrington chose to make love to me it could be for no other reason than because he loved me. You and Miss Mackenzie were both rich, he probably cared for neither of you."

"Violet! Violet! you are cruel, you should not say such things," cried Janet, shrinking as if she had been cut with a knife. "And indeed, indeed, you are mistaken; he will deceive you, if he speaks to you of love, for he is too selfish to intend to marry you."

"My dear Janet, you insult me!" said Violet coldly. "But all this is mere idle talk; it is kind of you to have told me your story, if you thought it would be of any use to me; but Kit Barrington is nothing to me, nor ever will be. I have not the least idea of letting him make any kind of love to me, so now good night, love, don't let us talk of these agitating subjects any longer," and with one of those Judas-like kisses, which women can give and take so easily from each other, Violet dismissed her visitor, and was left alone to the company of her own not very cheerful reflections.

(To be continued.)

UNREASONABLE REMEDIES.

HEALTH being so precious, there is perhaps nothing surprising in that the want of it should sometimes induce otherwise sensible people to resort to the most absurd expedients, with the hope of recovery. An unhealthy body soon begets a more or less unhealthy state of mind, which accounts for the singular welcome that has been accorded to quackery in all periods of the world's history, by persons belonging to every station in life. The ignorant, no doubt, are peculiarly liable to be led away; still, the learned do not always escape. Indeed, the friends of the sufferer, although better things might be expected of them, are frequently eager for the trial of some legendary remedy, that is neither based on science nor common-sense. They have heard of such and such treatment having been successful in another case that seemed somewhat similar, or perhaps they have used something of the kind, with no serious result, so upon this recommendation, without their knowing the nature of the disease, nor the effect of the remedy, the sufferer submits, in the fond hope that he has found a cure at last. Should his ailment take a turn for the better, they credit themselves with the improvement, and if for the worse, there is consolation in laying the blame on fate.

Fortunately the greater number of these fanciful cures are comparatively or altogether harmless, and some of them so old and respected as to excite wonder. A total want of connection be-

tween the remedy and the cure appears to be no drawback whatever in the estimation of some persons. Still, the exercise of faith may occasionally have a beneficial influence, and this alone will account for the marvellous recoveries, which we find trustworthy people maintain, have been brought about by very strange means. But even granting the efficacy of faith, there is difficulty in believing that warts, for instance, can be removed by following directions which I have known to be recommended as certain, to cause their disappearance. One remedy is to take as many knots or joints of barley straw as you have warts, rub one on every wart, after which they are to be hidden in a place where they will quickly rot. As the knots are eaten away in the process of decay, the warts are supposed to dwindle, until they finally disappear altogether. There is another method said to be equally satisfactory in result, although more difficult to accomplish. This consists of catching a snail by the horns, and throwing it over your head. Snails, however, are such wary creatures that the cure might be classed with one which John Bruce, Sir Walter Scott's piper, intended for his master. This affectionate servant spent a whole day selecting twelve stones from twelvesouth-running streams, with the purpose that the sick novelist might sleep upon them and become whole. When he brought them Scott was too much affected to hurt the honest fellow's feelings by ridiculing the notion of their possessing any virtue, so he caused him to be told that the recipe was infallible; but, it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapped in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again; upon learning which, the Highlander renounced all hope of completing the charm.

Although their number is growing less, many people have no real faith in doctors or their prescriptions. They may call in a regular practitioner when their own devices fail—not until then. Some put their trust in a medical-book, some in one thing, some in another. Hydropathy had a great many adherents for a time, perhaps on account of its novelty; yet probably Charles Lamb was not far wrong when he said, "It is neither new nor wonderful; for it is as old as the Deluge, which killed more than it cured." Many share Burke's opinion, that warm water is a specific against every bodily ill; and, by-the-by, only recently its merits in certain complaints went the round of the British press. Others, again, advocate the hunger-cure, especially for indigestion. The patient is advised to subsist on two or three ounces of white bread and one wine-glass of water, and give the remedy a sufficient course. In a case of this kind, by persevering, a cure might be warranted, as the sufferer would not only effectually place himself beyond the discomforts of indigestion, but every other ill to which human flesh is subject. Dr. Johnson's recipe for the same ailment is certainly not open to such grave objections, whatever its recommendations may be from a strictly medical point of view. Learning that Mrs. Boothby was subject to attacks, he wrote to his "dear angel:"—"Give me leave, who have thought much on medicine, to propose to you an easy, and, I think, a very probable remedy for indigestion and stomach complaints. Take an ounce of dried

orange-peel, finely powdered, divide it into scruples, and take one at a time. The best way is, perhaps, to drink it in a glass of hot red port; or eat it first, and drink the wine afterwards. Do not take too much in haste; a scruple once in three hours, or about five scruples a day, will be sufficient to begin; or less, if you find any aversion." The doctor's remedy may have no title to be classed as unreasonable; however, the next amply atones for what this lacks in that respect. Superstition dies slowly, and barbarism would seem to accompany it to the last. At an inquest held at Bradwell, Bucks, on the body of a girl, five years old, who died of hydrophobia, one of the witnesses deposed that two days after the child had been bitten, the buried dog was disinterred, its liver extracted, and a piece of it, weighing about an ounce and a half, frizzled on a fork before the fire until it was dried up, was given to the child, who ate it freely, but nevertheless died. They would scarcely go this length in the Highlands, where superstition flourishes, in spite of School Boards and other salutary influences. There, if a person is bitten, the dog is destroyed, whether mad or not, from the belief that, should it ever become rabid, the bitten person would develop similar symptoms. How reasoning beings can be deluded by these curious fancies is a mystery difficult of solution; but astonishment gives way to despair when we find they have an equal fascination in Germany, which has acquired a reputation for its learning. Not later than January, 1879, the President of the Eckenfoerder Shooting Club addressed the following remarkable epistle to the members of his association:—"Her Highness, Princess Bismarck, wishes to receive, before the 18th inst., as many magpies as possible, from the burned remains of which an anti-epileptic powder may be manipulated. I permit myself, therefore, high and well-born sir, to entreat that you will forthwith shoot as many magpies as you can in your preserves, and forward the same to the Chief Forester Lange, at Fredrichruhe, or hither, without paying for their carriage, down to the 18th of this month." Let us hope, whoever may have paid the carriage, received value for the money thus spent in the shape of a useful medicine, but of that grave doubts may well be entertained.

Loch Ma Nair, in Sutherlandshire is, by some of the people of the North, attributed with having miraculous curative powers, which tradition ascribes to an incident said to have happened nobody knows when. An old woman was the lucky owner of a talisman that enabled her to cure every afflicted person who sought her aid. The ailing came and were restored, so that her fame spread far and near. This was all very well until some unprincipled persons thought, by gaining possession of the talisman, they might render themselves independent of the old woman and bestow health on whom they would. With the intent of taking her unawares in her cottage, which stood near the margin of the loch, they assembled and presented themselves before she had time to hide her treasure. But on revealing their design, she forced a way through them, crying, "Ma Nair! Ma Nair!" (Gaelic, meaning "For shame! for shame!"), hastened to the loch and threw the talisman in. It was now lost to everybody of course, or, at least, that was the general impression for a time. However, some-

body discovered, instead of its being put beyond the reach of the ailing, it was never in such good or safe keeping; for having communicated its healing powers to the water, anybody who came and bathed experienced the benefit. What is more they do come, even to this day, for a dip in the loch, and go away eased in mind, if not in body. "Ma Nair," the expression which the old woman used, still clings to these supposed curative waters, in proof that the strange story had its foundation in fact.

Lady Duff Gordon relates an amusing incident, of how she cured an old Egyptian woman, to whom she gave a powder wrapped in a piece of the *Saturday Review*. Some time afterwards the old woman returned and assured her benefactress the charm was a wonderfully powerful one, for although she was not able to wash off all the fine writing from the paper, what she had succeeded in removing proved highly beneficial! She would have appreciated the method of a Llama doctor, who, when medicine is not at hand, writes the remedy suitable to administer on a scrap of paper, moistens it, rolls it up in the form of a pill, which his patient swallows. Should paper be as scarce as medicine, the name of the drug is chalked on a board, then washed off, and the water drunk. Without speculating as to whether the people of Llama lengthen or shorten their days by patronising the "faculty," let us take a case reported from Edinburgh. The late Dr. John Brown of that city gave a labourer a prescription, saying, "Take this and come back in a fortnight, when you will be well." Obedient to the injunction the patient returned at the fortnight's end, with a clean tongue and a happy face. The doctor saw he was better, but for the moment forgot what he had ordered him to take. "Let me see what I gave you," he said. "Oh," answered the man; "I took it." "Yes, I know you did; but where is the prescription?" "I swallowed it," was the grave reply.

Lady Baker, in her travels, records a number of unreasonable remedies, which were picked up in various parts of the globe. Not the least amusing of these was the case of a shepherd in New Zealand, who resorted to patent medicines as a cure for home sickness, because, in his own words, they "took my mind off the loneliness, and cheered me up wonderful." A Kaffir, in the service of the same lady, suffering from a bad bilious attack, declined to be treated in a civilized way, and in a very short time reported himself perfectly well—a native doctor having bled his great toe. Again, what could be better than how Charlie cured Tom's headache? "Tom had a frightful headache, which is not to be wondered at, considering how that boy smoked the strongest tobacco out of a cow's horn morning, noon, and night, to say nothing of incessant snuff-taking? The first I heard of Tom's headache was when Charlie came to ask me for a remedy, which I thought very nice on his part, because he and Tom live in a chronic state of quarrelling, and half my time is taken up in keeping the peace between them. I told Charlie that I knew of no remedy for a bad headache, except going to bed, and this is what I should advise Tom to do. Charlie smiled rather contemptuously, as if pitying my ignorance, and asked if I would give him a box of wooden matches. Now, matches are a standing grievance in a Kaffir

establishment; so I, failing to connect wooden matches and Tom's headache together, began a reproachful catalogue of how many boxes of matches he had asked for lately. Charlie hastily cut me short by saying, 'But, ma'am, it for make Tom well.' Of course I produced a new box, and stood by to watch Charlie doctoring Tom. Match after match did Charlie strike, holding the flaming splinter up Tom's exceedingly wide nostrils, until the box was empty. Tom winced a good deal, but bore this singeing process with great fortitude. Every now and then he cried out when Charlie thrust a freshly-lighted match up his nose, but, on the whole, stood it bravely; and by the time the matches were all burnt out, he declared his headache was quite cured, and that he was ready to go and chop wood. 'It is very good stuff to smell, ma'am,' said Charlie; 'burn de sickness away.'

For ingenuity in emergency, a certain sea-captain should take a high place. A suffering seaman having approached that worthy for something to relieve him, the medicine-chest and instruction-book were brought forth. After looking up the complaint, a dose of "number eighteen" was discovered to be the thing proper to the occasion. On opening the medicine-chest, the captain saw there was none of "eighteen" left. He paused for a moment, scratched his head, remembered that ten and eight made the required number, and then gave the man a dose from each. He got better, too, which convinced the captain of the correctness of the principle involved.

A "line," as a remedy for toothache, is still in request among Highlanders. Some jargon, written on a piece of paper, is given, folded, to the sufferer, with strict orders not to look at it, and this he carries in his breast. There is nothing particularly revolting in cherishing such a bosom friend; but the person who adopts an application of earthworms for rheumatism can scarcely be congratulated on the company with which he is surrounded.

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

DAHLIAS.

NO flower perhaps has contributed greater richness and variety of colour to our gardens than the dahlia. And yet it was as an article of food that it first appeared amongst us. Novelists will please to notice that in describing gardens of the last century, they must not mention the dahlia. It is a Mexican plant which reached Spain in 1789, Paris in 1801, and England in 1802. As an edible tuber it proved a failure, because the root has a taste of turpentine which was found disagreeable. What it became as an ornamental flower, every one knows. The name, which is derived from Dr. Dahl, looks rather pedantic, though it sounds well enough; and an effort was once made to re-christen the plant, *Georgina*, but this attempt broke down. It is cultivated in Indian gardens, but not with English success; at Mussoorie, however, and in the valley of the Doon, escaping from the gardens it grows wild, becoming again in that condition, a single flower. The disk and rays reappear, and it diminishes in size. What glorious tints of crimson and purple and maroon have been forced upon this plant, in its original state of a yellow colour!

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LONDON: FEBRUARY 28, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

DOUBLE AND QUILTS.

BY H. E. CLARKE.

CHAPTER I.

DOUBLE.

I WAS what is called "entering upon a literary career" at the time the first of the series of incidents occurred, an account of which I now propose to set down in writing. Flushed with the success which had crowned my efforts in the one provincial weekly newspaper published at the adjacent market-town, I left my native village for London, nothing doubting that a like success was in store for me there.

My relations were much opposed to my choice of an occupation; but then relations are always much opposed to anything one has a real liking for; and I had a little money, and was of age, and quite determined to do as I pleased. My parents were dead, but my eldest brother and my uncle were very kind and assiduous in supplying me with the fullest information as to the exact proportions of folly, obstinacy and conceit, which, according to them, wholly composed my character, and which made my total failure in this world a foregone conclusion; while my religious sister affectionately declared that, in addition to these qualities, I possessed a fund of moral obliquity which would effectually dispose of my chances in the other. I am old now, and so I have got to see that all this was for my good, and was quite right and proper; but it annoyed me a good deal at the time, and I left home hurriedly in the end.

Of course I had to "rough it" considerably at first, but not more than if I had been junior clerk in a respectable office. Of course I earned little, but not less than such a junior. And equally, of course, as I was not afraid of work, nor such a fool as my relations thought (scarcely anybody

is, by the way), I managed at last to do fairly well.

I had been in London some three years, and had settled down to the ordinary journalistic grind, when one autumn afternoon, just as it was getting dusk, a strange thing happened to me. I had been to call on the editor of a newspaper, for whom I was working at the time, and was returning down Fleet Street to the City, where I had to meet a friend, when a respectably-dressed old gentleman, of benevolent aspect, stopped me and pronounced these words with extraordinary emphasis and vigour.

"I have discovered all. In three months it must be generally known, and then your ruin is certain. Confess to the firm, and make what amends you can, before that time, and you may be forgiven."

I may as well confess at once (because you are sure to find it out before this story is done) that I am afflicted with a particularly hasty temper. I roared, "What do you mean, you old lunatic? Go to the deuce!" An expression of sorrow came over the old man's face, and he passed on without a word. I had expected an angry retort, and my astonishment was greater than ever. I wished I had not been so hasty. I ran after the old fellow, but he had disappeared in the crowd, and I could see nothing of him. As may be supposed, I was excessively puzzled and annoyed. To have an Agony Column advertisement flung at one's head in the public streets after that fashion is not pleasant, and besides anything difficult of explanation is repugnant to the really well-regulated mind. Was it an example of that pernicious species of idiocy known as "practical joking?" I could not bring myself to believe it. The old gentleman did not look like a practical joker, and the tone of voice in which he had spoken carried perfect conviction to me of his sincerity. I decided that it certainly was not a practical joke. Then the man had mistaken me for some one else? That seemed improbable too, for he had looked at me fixedly, and there was as usual plenty of light

in Fleet Street. But while I speculated thus, I suddenly remembered that some months before when lunching at a well-known restaurant near Charing Cross, an utter stranger had come up, smiling and nodding, to ask me "If I was coming to the old shop to-night?"

"I think you have made a mistake," I said.

"O no," he replied, in a tone of absolute conviction. "Your name is Hall."

"Nothing of the kind," I answered curtly, angry at the fellow's assurance, and he went away slowly, with an amused look on his face, as if he found it an excellent jest for a man to refuse to acknowledge his own name.

The occurrence made little impression on me at the time, but now, as I remembered it, it seemed to offer a possible explanation of the present mistake. "Hall must be very like me," I thought, and I could not help reflecting that if he were, as seemed highly probable, a rascal, it would have been much more convenient to me for him to be like some one else.

However, it could not be helped. I told the story to one or two of my friends, who were pleased to be facetious on the subject, and I made a note of the occurrence in my diary, under date the "twenty-first of November, 18—." Then, being at the time extremely busy, I ceased to think anything about it.

But it so chanced that a short while after I had occasion to consult a physician about certain unpleasant symptoms which were troubling me. Now, when I was ushered into the great man's room he was sitting at his table, writing, and after looking up and saying "Good morning," he motioned me to a seat by his side, and continued writing for about a minute. Then putting down his pen, he said quietly—

"Well, have you done what I told you?"

"I have not seen you before!" I said in surprise.

He started, turned sharply, and looked me in the face.

"Good heavens, what a likeness!" he exclaimed. "I must apologize to you for my rudeness," he continued rising, "but I took you for a patient of mine to whom you certainly bear a striking resemblance. When I come to examine you closely I can detect a difference, but at first sight the illusion was perfect."

"I suppose your patient's name is Hall," I remarked.

"Yes," he said laughing; "have you been mistaken for him before?"

I replied that I had; and after I had been examined, and pronounced to be suffering from nervous depression, consequent on overwork and late hours, he reverted to his mistake, and said that he had certainly never seen so striking a likeness. He conducted me to the door of his consulting-room, which opened into the waiting-room, and, shaking hands, observed that I had better call again in a week. A gentleman with his back to us was the only occupant of the waiting-room, and at the sound of our voices he turned. Decidedly the resemblance was striking!

We stood stupidly staring at each other without speaking, till the doctor broke into a laugh.

"Do you wonder that I made the mistake?" he said to me. "Why I declare I can only just tell which is which at this moment. Allow me to

introduce you; it was certainly never intended that two gentlemen so closely alike should go through life strangers to each other. Mr. Hall, Mr. Leicester; Mr. Leicester, Mr. Hall."

We murmured some commonplaces in a confused imbecile manner, and I got out as soon as possible, cursing the doctor's officiousness. I had conceived a violent dislike to my double from the first glance, and, indeed, long before it, for I could not get over the idea that it was an intolerable liberty for him to take to go about resembling me to that exasperating extent. Besides, when the first shock of surprise was over, I was inclined to think the likeness only a superficial one, and I utterly refused to admit that Hall's expression was anything like mine. I had the idea, for example, that I looked like a reasonably honest man, while I thought Hall looked like an underhand rascal, and peered uneasily through his eyes as though they were somebody else's keyholes. I decided that if we ever met again I would ignore the doctor's introduction, and treat him as if I had never seen him before.

But it was not to be. My health, bodily and mental, became rapidly worse. I had got into a low, morbid condition, and iron and quinine, and nux vomica and phosphorus, and the rest of the complicated filth with which Dr. Barnett plied me, did me no good. Seeing this, the excellent man began, after the manner of his profession, to prescribe impossibilities; "horse exercise," when I could only just afford a "bus"; "early hours," when my work necessitated my being up half the night three days a week; "country air," when I must be within a mile or so of Fleet Street, and so on. Also he talked me into paroxysms of nervous apprehension; for he had the utter want of tact which seems a speciality of eminent physicians and women; and I was always discovering alarming symptoms, and rushing off to him with them; and in a word my life became a perfect misery to me before I had been a month under his care.

One day I was certain that I was about to be paralyzed. There was an odd heaviness and numbness about my right leg, I remember, and off I went as usual to Dr. Barnett's in a pitiable condition enough. He was not in at the moment, so I was ushered into the waiting-room, where I was at once greeted heartily by my double, whom I had not seen since our introduction above recorded. I was in far too abject a state of mind to carry out my intention of "cutting" him; so abject indeed that a few expressions of sympathy caused me to disburden my mind to him, and I am bound to say that he did me much more good than the doctor would have done. He said he had suffered in the same way as I, even to numbness of limbs and agonizing apprehensions of evil; that doctors were very little good, that regular meals, cheerful society, and outdoor exercise, were better than drugs, and that I was decidedly "keeping myself too low." In the end, without waiting for the doctor's return, he bore me off to dine with him, and when we parted at a rather late hour I was much less melancholy.

The next day, when I was as bad as ever, I recollected with anguish that I had invited Hall to dine with me in the evening. It was of no use, I simply could not endure the idea. I sent him a telegram putting off the engagement on the score of ill-health, and then felt easier.

A few days after he called upon me, consoled with and encouraged me, and left me with a distinct idea that he was a kindly, cheery soul, who did me good. Yet it was odd that so soon as the immediate effect of his presence had worn away, a revulsion of feeling occurred, and again I decided to let my singularly-made acquaintance drop. But now it was too late; he knew my address, he made repeated calls, he wanted, he said, to take me out of myself a little. He suggested visits to theatres, and offered to accompany me in country walks, which he was sure would do me good. I refused persistently. I wished him at the deuce; but in the end his pertinacity carried the day. I was too wretchedly ill to take any interest in anything, or to care what happened to me, and I allowed him to do with me pretty much as he liked. Gradually he attained a great influence over me, I was continually asking his advice, and, more singular still, taking it. My individuality seemed about to be merged in his. I remember a wild dyspeptic dream I had about this time, in which I was made aware that Hall and I were henceforward only one person; and there was a painful consciousness in me that we were much more Hall than anybody else. The dream made a great impression upon me, and Hall acquired a new and mysterious interest in my eyes after it. There were two curious idiosyncracies of his that I could not well understand. One was his dislike to be publicly seen with me in London, the other, the mystery he made of his lodgings. He could not find a suitable place, he said, and he was shifting his quarters so constantly that I had to address my letters to him to all sorts of places, "to be left till called for."

He got into the habit of coming to spend the evening with me whenever I was at home alone, and a cup and saucer were regularly laid for him at my tea-table. One evening towards the end of January, tea was finished, and we were smoking our cigarettes. I took up my journal to enter a memorandum of an article I had promised for a new magazine, when I chanced upon the account, under the date of 21st Nov. in the previous year, of my strange meeting with the old man in Fleet Street. I had been so busy, and so bothered with my various ailments, that it had quite slipped my memory. It came upon me with almost as great a shock as at first.

"Good gracious!" I cried, "my ruin is certain in another month, and I had forgotten all about it."

"What are you talking about?" asked Hall.

And then, being somewhat proud of the conspicuous way in which I had told the story, I read the whole to him. I was quite flattered at the interest he took in the incident. He was generally the narrator, and I the listener; a change was pleasant. He questioned me minutely about the old man's appearance, and the exact words he used, and at last aroused my suspicions.

"Do you know the man?—and was it another mistake?" I asked point-blank.

He stared at me as if he thought I had gone suddenly mad.

"You must give up writing those sensational stories," he said. "They are affecting your brain. I have no doubt that this wonderful affair was merely a practical joke, and I would take odds

that I could lay my hand on the man who planned and executed it. He is a clever young actor, whom I happen to have met, and your description tallies exactly with a certain disguise of his. He seems to have taken you in thoroughly at any rate."

I recollect with something like astonishment even at this distance of time that this explanation thoroughly satisfied me. My infatuation must indeed have been complete.

More than a week after this, Hall, with considerable parade of secrecy, introduced me to a young lady, "a friend of his," Miss Kitty Blount. She was a pretty, black-haired, bright-eyed, laughing damsel enough, and made herself very pleasant to me. Indeed we all got on so well that before we parted it was arranged that we should go the next Sunday to dine at Richmond together. We were to meet at Waterloo Station at one o'clock.

It was a divine morning, and I was first at the rendezvous, but I had only to wait about five minutes before Kitty appeared, when I at once perceived something was wrong. She looked quite cast down, and seemed to have been crying.

"Isn't it a nuisance?" she cried, on seeing me. "Those beastly people that Ted works for" (I had never got to know what he worked at, by-the-by) "have sent for him this morning on particular business, so he can't come. Brutes, ain't they? I always did hate business-men, and I always shall."

I tried to comfort the young lady, but without much success.

"It's such a lovely morning for Richmond," she said, despairingly, "and I've been counting on it, too."

Something in the tone of her voice caused me to glance at her curiously, and then it struck me it would be a pity to disappoint her. I offered my services, was accepted with very little demur, and that little obviously formal.

One curious incident occurred as we took a turn in the Park to get an appetite for the dinner we had ordered, which was that we met, face to face, the old gentleman who had stopped me in Fleet Street. He was with two or three ladies, and he glanced at us apparently without recognition, and passed on.

"Are you taken worse?" asked Kitty, brusquely, observing my discomfiture.

I said I had trodden on a stone, and hurt my foot.

Kitty laughed with derision.

"I saw you," she said. "You know that old boy, and you didn't like meeting him, did you? Who is he? Are you afraid of him? Will he give you a wiggling? You and your foot, indeed! You must think me pretty soft."

Seeing that deception was of no use, I told Kitty as much of the truth as I thought necessary, and ended by explaining that Hall had assured me the old gentleman we had just seen was a young actor of his acquaintance, in disguise, and that I couldn't understand it.

Kitty couldn't either, nor did she attempt it, for the matter of that. She changed the conversation, and before we returned home at night I had forgotten the encounter.

The next day I was arrested as I went out of

my lodgings, charged with embezzling various moneys belonging to my late employers, a firm I had never heard of before. The old gentleman, whose name turned out to be Nicholls, and who was managing clerk to the firm, swore that my name was Edward Hall, and that I had been book-keeper under him for about twelve months. That I had left in a hurry, without assigning any good reason, and that, his suspicions being thereby aroused, he had examined my books, and found I had by falsifying entries and other means, managed to cheat my employers out of upwards of one hundred pounds. The astonishing old person went on to say that out of respect for my dead father, whom he had known years ago, he had paid out of his own pocket the sum I had embezzled, and having met me in the street, had given me the chance to confess my crime, and make what amends I could. If this offer had been accepted the present action would not have been taken, but I had replied only by insulting language. Since then, as there was every reason to believe I was leading a highly irregular and improper life, it had been decided to have me arrested, but I had not been tracked home until the day before. Some other formal evidence was then given, and the magistrate asked me if I had anything to say. Naturally I had a good deal.

I pointed out that my name was not Edward Hall, but Guy Leicester; that I was a journalist, and had never been in the employ of the firm named; that the great likeness between Hall and myself had led to the mistake, and that I demanded to be instantly released.

The magistrate shrugged his shoulders and remarked drily that business was not done in exactly that way, and I was remanded for a week, but was released on bail before night.

As there is nothing particularly entertaining in the case, I may as well pass it over with the observation that at the next hearing I was triumphantly discharged, "without a stain on my character." The old gentleman apologized so humbly to me, and was so entirely cast down by his mistake that I could not bear malice against him, and we shook hands.

"But," said he, "that girl you were with at Richmond—she was always about with Hall. She gave us your address, and said you were the man we wanted."

"Indeed," I remarked with an uncomfortable feeling of heat all over me; "ah! I think I can see why she was so very anxious to go to Richmond now."

I suppose it is unnecessary to add that Hall and Miss Blount had completely disappeared by the time I had proved I was not the former: that goes without saying. It came out that Hall had discovered the police to be on his track just before he introduced me to Kitty, but the adroit mystification had given him plenty of time to get clear off, and the police had as usual "no clue whatever to guide them in their investigations."

For myself, the excitement and worry aggravated my nervous disorder so much that I was compelled to take a month's holiday in the country, as I ought to have done before. My brother and my uncle were pleased to see me brought so low, and pointed out that their evil predictions were being fulfilled. As for my unfortunate connection

with Hall, they remarked that a man is known by the company he keeps, and that it was only what I might expect. My religious sister contented herself with observing that the way of transgressors is hard; and so, invigorated by fresh country air, and soothed by domestic sympathy and love, my shattered nerves rapidly grew strong again, and at the month's end I returned to my work quite restored to health.

CHAPTER II.

QUITS.

SOME years passed away, and this unpleasant adventure of mine became a dim memory, and no more. It still held its place as the most unpleasant adventure I had chanced upon; but my life was a busy one, and I had many other adventures, pleasant and unpleasant, to think about before long. I was twenty-eight; I was making a fairly good income; I had published a successful first novel; my hands were pretty full of work, and I had saved a little money. When I fell passionately in love with Juliet Dimsdale. Her father was a sort of literary *dilettante*, or hanger-on; a man who had earned enough to retire upon, by doing something or other with tallow in the City, but who had always hankered after literary distinction more than anything else. He had published (at his own expense) a book of dreadfully feeble "Rhymes and Essays," the "Rhymes" being "comic," with all the puns duly printed in italics; and the "Essays" satirical and humorous, with the salient points typographically indicated in the same fashion. I never heard of anybody reading this work, but with his second book Samuel Dimsdale struck oil—or tallow, which is much the same thing. His pamphlet upon the "Fluctuations in the Tallow Market for the Last Twenty Years," was a distinct success; and as he knew the editor of the *Clarion*, on which paper I was then principally employed, the edict went forth that it was to be reviewed at length in our columns. None of us knew anything about tallow, for the *Clarion* was not a mercantile paper; but Brooks and I, who were reviewing, tossed for old Dimsdale's pamphlet, and of course I lost, and had to do it.

This involved a visit to the office of the *Soap-boilers' Gazette and Tallow Chronicle*, and a lunch to little Finigan, the editor thereof, who told me what to say, only stipulating that he should be allowed to put in one or two unimportant mistakes, that he might correct them in his own paper afterwards. When the review came out old Dimsdale was delighted, and nothing would satisfy him but an introduction to the writer of the notice.

"Sir," said he, wringing my hand heartily, "you are young, and you have a great career before you. You understand the tallow trade as only a genius can, and, what is better, you write as if you love it. Come and dine with me on Tuesday, and we will have a good evening's talk about it."

I accepted this invitation, with the full intention of telegraphing an excuse before the time came; but my editor prevailed on me to go.

"You can manage him with a little tact," he

said. "He doesn't want to hear you talk, he wants you to listen, and praise him. He will give you a good dinner, and he has a very pretty daughter."

Juliet Dimsdale was more than pretty; she was handsome, and in the grand style, "large, lovely arms, and a neck like a tower," and much brown hair, knotted and braided and tangled about her head. She looked upon me with the most provoking indifference at first, and I judged that her experience of her father's guests had not been cheerful. I let off one or two test remarks during dinner, and observed with satisfaction that I had puzzled her.

When we joined her in the drawing-room, old Dimsdale went to sleep on the sofa, with his mouth open, and we were left to entertain each other.

"After the conversation at dinner," I said, to open the engagement, "you must think that I am, figuratively speaking, wrapped up in tallow, Miss Dimsdale."

She gave me a bright rapid glance, which seemed to go quite through me, and come out at my back.

"I am not so sure of that," she replied; "I was inclined to think that the gentleman who fancied 'P.Y.C.' had something to do with racing—couldn't know much about tallow."

"But I thought he said 'T.Y.C.," I protested. "However," I went on, "you are quite right. I am an impostor so far as tallow is concerned. I had to get all the information at second-hand, and I should not have come here under false pretences if it had not been for your friend, Mr. Hilditch, my editor; he urged me to come, and I shall be grateful to him as long as I live."

"Oh, Mr. Hilditch is one of the few people who visit us that I am always pleased to see," she exclaimed, ignoring my implied compliment. "But why did he urge you to come, if you didn't want?"

"He thought," I began, putting what I considered was a world of tender meaning into my voice, "that I should be——"

Another quick glance went quite through me again, just above my second shirt-stud, and my mind became an absolute blank as to the end of my sentence. I stammered, gasped, and was silent; and some time after she told me that this confusion of mine was the most satisfactory compliment I managed to pay her that evening.

After this we got on remarkably well, and when old Dimsdale awoke, all too soon for me, we were deep in an interesting literary discussion.

"Eh? What's that?" said the old man, pricking up his ears. "Ruskin?—Carlyle?—Tennyson? Ah, I was well up in all of them a few years ago, when I was writing my first book. (Julie, my dear, get Mr. Leicester a copy of 'Rhymes and Essays.') I assure you I studied them thoroughly—analyzed them you know, and all that. Carlyle's style is rugged I think, but I like the 'May Queen' and the 'Psalm of Life.' Eh? O—ah—Longfellow, so it is. I'm getting rather rusty now; but I used to know 'em all."

And then he proceeded to occupy one hour and a half in convincing me that he knew nothing about literature at all, a task which need not have taken a third of the time.

When I rose to depart he expressed himself highly delighted with my company, and recom-

mended me to drop in and have a talk about tallow, or books, whenever I liked.

"I'm a Bohemian," he said, and looking at his solid respectable figure, arrayed in glossy broadcloth, I had great difficulty in repressing a smile.

I "dropped in" pretty often, as may be supposed, but I troubled myself no more about tallow. Juliet and I were much occupied in discovering how many tastes we had in common, and how very similar our ideas on various topics seemed to be, and how very strange it was. We thought nothing exactly like it had ever happened before!

The course of true love ran remarkably smooth, and three months after my first introduction to her, I proposed and was accepted, subject of course to "Papa's approval." This was rather more difficult to get than I had anticipated; the old man did not seem so delighted at the prospect of having me for a son-in-law, as I thought he should have done. I believe he had come to suspect that my affection for tallow was not sincere.

But it did not make much difference, as Juliet forced him to say yes in a little while, by the simple feminine expedient of making his life a misery to him till he did so. He only stipulated that we should wait a year, which did not seem very unreasonable.

For the space of about four months, then, I was a "jolly, thriving wooer," and found the character suit me marvellously. At the expiration of that time my accursed "double," whose existence I had completely forgotten, suddenly reappeared.

He was waiting outside my chambers one night when I came home, and I stood aghast at his effrontery in daring to face me again. When he asked me in the most matter-of-fact tone for a five-pound note, I confess my hasty temper got the better of me, and I proclaimed my opinion of him and his behaviour with considerable force and eloquence. It was thrown away upon him, however. He only shrugged his shoulders.

"It was my only way out of the hobble," he said calmly. "If I had been arrested I should have been imprisoned, and it did you no harm in the end. I wouldn't have done it if I could have seen any other way of escape. I am sorry, and that ought to be enough. I won't bother you again, if you give me five pounds now."

"And if I don't?" I asked, suppressing my passion as well as I could.

"I don't care to threaten," he said, "but you must see that I am more like you than ever, and now that you are engaged" (how on earth had the villain got to know that?) "you are more vulnerable than you were. And you know I am not very scrupulous, don't you?"

"If you don't get out of this place at once I will throw you out," I said, "and if you ever show your rascally face here again, I will give you in charge—now be off."

"I'm not going without the money," he said doggedly, and I saw he was calculating that he had to deal with the nervous invalid he had known years before.

I showed him his error in the briefest and most convincing manner, by taking him by the collar of his coat, and hurling him far into the sooty darkness of Stane's Inn garden, where he fell with

some force against a pump or a tree or a wall, or something of the kind.

When he raised himself he came slowly and painfully back to where I stood, shook his fist at me savagely, and said—

"By—you shall repent this!" and so walked I considered that "forewarned is forearmed," and did not disquiet myself about the menace.

A few days after I was dressing for a ball, at which I was to meet Juliet, when I received a telegram to say that my brother was dangerously ill, and wished to see me at once. "Start by night train," the message concluded.

I looked at my watch; there was just time to get to the terminus in a cab; but what about Juliet? I remembered that I had left it uncertain whether I should go to the ball or not, as it was possible I might have been detained at the *Clarion* office. I decided that I would not delay to write to her then, but would do so in the train, and post the letter on my arrival. I reached the small station of Twybury, eight miles from my brother's house, at half-past two in the morning, and was rather surprised to find that there was no one to meet me, but I reflected that perhaps my brother's illness had disorganized the household; and, there being no fly obtainable at Twybury at that hour, I trudged the eight miles in a vile drizzle, and reached my brother's house at a little before five o'clock on a dark winter morning. Nobody seemed to be up, and I could make nobody hear for a long time. It seemed odd, and for the first time a faint suspicion of something wrong arose in my mind.

I broke a window with some gravel, and then heard sounds of somebody stirring. Soon the front door was opened with a rattle of bolts and chains, and my brother himself appeared in his shirt sleeves, and said angrily: "What the mischief do you want?"

He had not been ill, and he had sent no telegram. I stayed with him for a couple of days, and we endeavoured to trace the sender of the message. It had been sent from Twybury, but the postmistress there had not noticed anything peculiar about the person who had handed it in; so far as she remembered he was a stranger, but that was all she knew.

I had no doubt whatever that the trick was Hall's, but we could find no trace of him anywhere, and my brother comforted me by remarking it was well he had done nothing worse, as it was clear he was a perfectly unscrupulous scoundrel.

When I got back to my chambers I was astonished to find the two letters I had written to Juliet from my brother's house lying on my table. They had not been opened, and were simply re-addressed to me in Juliet's handwriting. What on earth did it mean? My heart misgave me horribly. Why had I not come back before?

I rushed off to Dimsdale's house; there was straw laid down in the street in front of it. Good heavens—was Juliet ill? I bounded up the steps, and at my first low knock a stalwart footman appeared. He did not seem surprised to see me, but he said:

"Orders not to let you in, sir—can't do it, sir—go use, sir," and shut the door in my face.

Half-crazed, I flew to Hilditch's house. He came out at once.

"I am surprised to see you," he said, "I hoped I should never set eyes on you again."

"Good God," I cried, "am I mad, or is everybody else? What has happened? I have just got back from the country, where I was sent on a fool's errand, and I know nothing of what has occurred, except that whatever it is, Hall is at the bottom of it."

"Hall?" he asked. "What! your double as you call him?—But no, it couldn't be. Where do you say you were on Wednesday night at half-past eleven o'clock?"

"In the mail-train, going down to Twybury in Leamshire, at the summons of a forged telegram," I replied.

He passed his hand confusedly across his forehead. "I can't believe it," he muttered, with a look of absolute bewilderment, "I can't believe it. I was at Turner's ball, and I could swear you were there."

"I wasn't; it must have been Hall," I cried in an agony; "I had seen him a day or two before, and we quarrelled. But what happened? Tell me quickly, if you don't want to drive me mad."

He caught something of my excitement, my story began to look possible to him. In a few words he told me that there had been a dreadful scene at the ball. Old Dimsdale and his daughter were standing near him in an interval of the dancing, when I—as he and everybody else thought—had pushed rudely through the crowd, and being clearly much the worse for liquor, had disgracefully insulted and abused both Juliet and her father, and had escaped before the surrounding spectators had recovered from their astonishment.

But this was not the worst; the shock had been too much for the old man, and he was now lying at the point of death, his doctor being of opinion that apoplexy or paralysis might supervene at any moment.

When Hilditch had concluded his story, I felt like a man on whose head a large balk of timber has suddenly fallen. I could not speak—I could not reason—I could not even think. I remember that I stretched out both my arms, and grasped wildly at nothing. Then Hilditch led me into his study and gave me a glass of brandy, after which I was able to tell him all that I knew. He had been aware of my former adventure with Hall, and after hearing me to the end in silence, he got up and shook hands with me warmly.

"I believe what you have told me," he said, "and I will do all I can for you. I will call at Dimsdale's and see Juliet to-morrow morning—it is too late to-night—and I will come on to your chambers at once. Now go home and go to bed, or you will be ill."

I left him, but I neither went home nor to bed. I felt it would be too ghastly a mockery. I wandered about the streets all night, making Dimsdale's house my centre of operations, and returning there to gaze at the windows, every few hours. The City's pulse went gradually down from fever at twelve to catalepsy at four; was intermittent again at five, and rose to the normal beat at seven, when a long bar of pale orange colour, dividing the leaden clouds in the East, proclaimed to all whom it might concern that day had really dawned. I could not possibly expect to see Hilditch before noon; but my night's wandering had not been without effect; every nerve in my body cried out for rest. I went to

my chambers and cast myself down as I was on my sofa, and five and a half hours after (it seemed only a short three minutes to me) Hilditch awoke me. I saw at once that he had no good news.

"I have done what I could," he said, "but until her father is out of danger it is no use talking to Juliet. She is in an agony of remorse about him, thinks she has neglected him, and all the rest of it; and the fact is, we must wait and hope."

"But does she still believe it was I who came drunk to the ball, and was the cause of all this?" I exclaimed. "Did you explain?"

"Yes—yes," he replied, "I explained everything; but her father's illness has swept you and everything else out of her mind for the present, and I really couldn't tell if she understood me or not. We must wait now—it is all we can do."

I don't know how I managed to live through the next week. Without Hilditch I should never have done it, I am sure; but he called at Dimsdale's every day and brought me reports, and though they were always the same as the first, they were something to look forward to. I gave him before the week was out proof positive of the truth of my story, and this was circulated among my friends; and my character, so far as they were concerned, was cleared. But Juliet refused to hear my name mentioned, and once after Hilditch had been more than usually insistent on my behalf, she exclaimed passionately—

"I don't care whether he did it or not. It was a man with his face, and I shall hate him for ever."

After this I began to despair; and my only comfort was to see the detectives whom I had employed to hunt Hall down, and to urge them to renewed exertions. I had faith that if I could capture the actual offender Juliet would relent. But my detectives were not those of the three volume novelist. They were the ordinary sort. They were always on the scent, they were always in possession of an important clue. They were always energetic and mysterious, and they would never in a thousand years have caught anybody.

At the end of this wretched week a story of mine, written long before, appeared in the *Clarion*, and created some sensation. It contained an exposure of some of the dealings of low pawnbrokers with their poorer customers, and it was quoted and talked of right and left. A question founded upon it was even asked in parliament, and evoked an answer no more oracular and unintelligible than usual. More than this, it came to light that one of the principal offenders aimed at was recognized by his neighbours, and had his windows broken in consequence. I had no difficulty in identifying this man with the writer of an anonymous letter which I then received, informing me that I was a marked man, that my face was well known, and that I should do well to prepare for death. But I had once or twice before received such missives, and did not attach any particular importance to this specimen.

Another week passed, and still there was no change and no relief for me. Old Dimsdale was no better, Juliet no less obdurate, and the detectives were no nearer finding Hall. I had received another anonymous letter of so truculent a character, that I handed it to the police; and as I had also noticed an ill-favoured rascal lurking about near my chambers in Stane's Inn after

dark on more than one occasion, I requested the policeman on that beat to keep his eye upon the place.

One night I went home earlier than usual, as I had a good deal of work to do that could be best done in the solitude of my chambers; and work was the only thing that did me any good at this time. My ill-favoured friend was not on guard, but, looking out of my windows two hours later, I thought I saw his slouching figure near the door. A few minutes after a heavy step ascended the stairs, and there was a loud knock at my door. I took my poker, and said, "Come in," fully expecting to see my truculent pawnbroker.

But it was Hall, who walked jauntily in, and closed the door behind him. Instinctively I raised the poker, but even as I did so he lifted his right hand, in which I saw the glitter of metal, and covered me with a small revolver.

"I came prepared for violence," he said quietly, "and I would as soon shoot you as not. Drop that poker, or I will fire."

The table was between us, and he had me at a disadvantage. I laid the poker on the table, and said—

"What do you want with me?"

During the rest of the interview his eyes never left me for a single second, nor did his fingers cease to play about the trigger of his weapon.

"Of course it is war between us at present," he said, "and you have lost the first battle. I have settled with you for pitching me out of doors, and I bear no malice. I don't want to bother you any more, if you are reasonable. I want money—I want you to send those cursed detectives about their business—I want you to leave me alone; and then I will leave you alone, except when I want a sovereign or so, which will not be very often. What do you say?"

"That you are an impudent, cowardly, murderous hound, and that I will make no terms with such a villain."

He laughed contemptuously.

"I don't mind mere abuse," he said. "You are out of temper now, but you had better reflect for a few minutes. If you do not accept my terms, I swear I will never leave you alone again. You have seen a little of what I can do. I will make your life a burden to you. Don't flatter yourself that your detectives are pressing me hard. I could dodge them for twenty years, if need were; but it is rather a nuisance, and I don't see why I should be compelled to dodge at all. Give me a ten-pound note now and then when I am hard up; swear by all you hold sacred that you will not have me arrested, and I will not annoy you again. Refuse, and I will drag you down and ruin you, as surely as my name is Hall. You can't deceive me. I have had you under strict surveillance for months, and I know all about you, and I know, too, that a few more scenes such as that at Turner's ball would ruin you with most of your friends, whatever you might say or do."

It is a great satisfaction to me to remember that I made no answer whatever to this speech. I was inclined to think it might be disagreeably near the truth, but no amount of physical or mental torture would have induced me to hold any parley with this loathsome creature. My silence annoyed him more than any speech, and I think he saw that his case was hopeless.

"You dog!" he said savagely, "I have half a mind to shoot you now, as I have shot your betters."

He pointed the revolver at my head, and we looked in each other's eyes.

"After all," he said, lowering his pistol, "such a death would be too good for you. I shall have more fun out of you the other way. War let it be henceforward, and war to the knife. I have your key in my pocket. I shall lock your door as I go, that you may not be able to follow me. You see, I think of everything. Good-night; and, take my word for it, you will live to repent to-night's work to the last day of your life!"

He backed out of the room as he spoke, still covering me with the revolver. Once outside, with one quick movement he sent the "oak" crashing to, and I heard the key turn in the lock. I rushed to the window; it was too high for a leap; I was half-mad with impotent fury. He came out into the gas-light below, and, looking up, smiled at me. I shall never forget that face, so like my own, showing pale in the flickering gas-light, with the ghastly smile of triumphant hate upon it that it was destined never to lose again.

For a figure slouched out of the shadow behind him, and raising aloft in both hands some sort of weapon, shouted the words—

"Take that from the pawnbroker!" and sent it with a horrible, dull thud into the back of Hall's head.

He did not cry or groan, or make the slightest sound; he fell dead on his face, and the pawnbroker, turning to make his escape, ran into the arms of my policeman.

I thought my double and I were quits at last. In about a year from that time I married Juliet Dimsdale. Her father had quite recovered from his illness, but a not uncommon consequence of such seizures as his had followed. His mind was a perfect blank as to his long illness and the cause of it. The last thing he remembered was a glass of brown sherry, taken before he started for the ball.

Neither Juliet nor I ever cared to help him to remember more.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever;" "Juliet's Guardian;" "Pure Gold;" "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER IX.

GOOD-BYE TO KIT.

MY heroine was one of those women—and there are many such—to whom intrigues and deception are a real pleasure. No sooner had Janet Maxwell left her than she began to consider very seriously how she could best turn to account the story that had just been related to her. To say that she had not felt that story keenly would be incorrect. Violet was false and worldly and selfish, but there was one spot of reality and truth in her character. She was very genuinely in love with Kit. She had struggled and striven against this love; she was angry with herself for

it; it stood in the way of all her plans and projects; it worried and tormented her more than she had any idea that such a thing could have done, and yet she could not help herself nor get over it. And now Janet's story added fresh fuel to the fire of this unwelcome affection. With careful self-torture she pictured that past love-making over and over again to herself—those kisses, those words which Janet had told her "had burnt themselves into her memory for ever." Did she herself not understand what they were? She knew well enough that her taunt to Janet was a true one—that Kit must have sought the heiress for her money, whilst she—Violet—he sought for herself alone, and because he really loved her; and yet—and yet, though she could forgive him, she could not forgive the woman who had once thrilled and trembled beneath the same caresses that not an hour ago had been showered upon herself! As she thought of these things, Violet Clayton lay and writhed upon her bed in an agony of rage and jealousy, and she hated Janet Maxwell with a great hatred. And yet above all her misery, which was very real, Violet was glad that she knew of this story of Janet's. For here, of course, was an easy excuse, and a very romantic one, for breaking off her relations with Kit, for she had in no way forgotten that she had just engaged herself to marry David Lennard, and that she had to meet Kit Barrington before breakfast to tell him so. Her engagement to David was to be kept a secret for the present; that she had insisted upon.

It will be acknowledged that my heroine had by this time got herself into a very pretty predicament, and that her path was fraught with considerable danger on every side; but these difficulties in no way daunted or dismayed her. Had it not been for that unlucky penchant for Kit, in which her feelings so often got the better of her reason, Violet would have positively enjoyed the crooked paths along which she had chosen to walk. As it was, she was not quite easy in her mind; something like terror filled her heart as she thought of the morning's interview which lay before her. She feared Kit's anger somewhat, but much more did she fear his love, for she knew that with him she became a different woman altogether, and she dreaded her own weakness which she knew that he was aware of.

Kit Barrington was up with the lark, so as to be in time for his appointment with Violet. It was eight o'clock when he began to pace up and down the gravel walk where only the night before he had held her to his heart, and it was a quarter to nine before he saw her coming down the garden in the sunlight to meet him. He might have known that such unpunctuality argued ominously for him. A woman who goes to meet the man she loves with a glad heart is always the first to keep the appointment; the man is often five, ten, or even fifteen minutes late; he has had to hurry through his business, to write an urgent letter before he started, or, perhaps, some one came in and delayed him just as he was setting out. But the woman is always in time. She has been probably sitting with her bonnet on for a quarter of an hour before the hand is on the hour, lest she should seem too eager, and yet starting off the instant the clock has struck lest she should be too late—a triumph which she rarely enjoys. But Violet had been awake all night, and had got

up at six o'clock, and yet it was a quarter to nine before she could summon up her courage to go out to keep her appointment with Kit Barrington. She had put on a shady straw hat and a pair of loose gardening gloves, and came sauntering down the garden with a beating, frightened heart. Kit went forward eagerly to meet her.

"How late you are? I thought you were never coming. Well, darling, what have you got to tell me?" and he drew her into the shelter of the shrubby walk. "You look so serious one would think you had decided against me," he added, with a half-nervous laugh, as Violet did not speak. "What are you going to say to me?"

"I want to say to you that we must forget all about last night," said Violet at last, in a low, trembling voice.

"Indeed! You are very kind, Miss Clayton; I notice that to forget all about things is your favourite method of getting over any little difficulty in your way. May I ask why forgetfulness is to be peculiarly practised on this occasion?" Violet drew up her head with a look of offended dignity.

"Since last night, Mr. Barrington, I have heard something that has completely changed my feelings towards you," she said, in a cold, hard voice.

"Indeed, and what may that be, Miss Clayton?" asked her lover, mocking her voice and manner. "Janet has told me."

"Oh! so that story has come out? Well, I am not surprised. My dear child, Janet Maxwell chose to throw herself at my head in rather a marked manner two years ago, and, as I am a poor devil, and she has fifteen hundred a-year, I was fool enough to think it rather a piece of good luck, and to fancy I could like her well enough to marry her."

"And the Miss Mackenzie you nearly ran away with?"

Kit Barrington was silent for a minute, and then he laughed.

"I see you know the whole story, Violet! Well, I confess that was a stupid business altogether. I meant to have told you, of course, and I would rather have given you my own version of it. The truth is, I was very hard up. I thought I would try and get a rich wife to help me out of my troubles. I cared for neither of those women in the least—I wanted their money. It is not heroic, of course, but it is human nature; but I can have no mercenary motives with you, Violet,—my darling! my little pet?" and Kit's deep voice trembled and shook as he took both her hands in his. "I swear to you that I love you with my whole heart! As there is a God above us, I swear to you that I never loved any woman in my life as I love you—and you know it, my darling—you know it very well!"

And Violet, though she trembled at his passionate words, yet shook off his hands impatiently and angrily. Her little flimsy excuse of Janet's story, which she had hoped would have served her purpose, had failed her utterly, in the face of those strong earnest words of love. The truth, the ugly bare truth, would have to be told him after all; and Violet did so dislike saying disagreeable things! it was very hard on her, she felt—still, she had been partly prepared for such a contingency, and had given some little thought to the manner of the telling of it.

"It can never, never be!" she began, with a sigh, unconsciously using the same form of words with which, months ago, she had dismissed her father's weak-minded curate; and she looked up into Kit's face with the same tearful eyes and the same little tremor in her voice, which had on that occasion afforded some faint gleams of hope to that discomfited young divine. She could not be natural! even now, when her heart and her happiness were really at stake, she was still, to herself, the interesting and unfortunate heroine acting through her little part with picturesque and graceful effect. Some women are made so—perpetually acting! They may be charming, loving, lovable; they may be tearfully persuasive or playfully arch; they may win you by their sighs, or fascinate you by their smiles; but, through it all, often almost unconsciously to themselves, they are actresses, still playing out their parts with every shade of manner which experience and imagination can bring to bear on the subject in hand. Violet Clayton loved Kit Barrington as much as she was capable of loving anything in the world after herself, and she was wilfully throwing away her one chance of happiness. She had deliberately accepted a man she did not care for, for the sake of his money, and she was now forced to lower herself for ever, in Kit's eyes, by telling him so; and yet, by this time, she had almost persuaded herself that she was a persecuted and injured damsel, virtuously resigning the mansheloved, to walk in the paths of stern and unpalatable duty. "I am very unhappy," she said, and there was a little catch in her voice, like a half-sob, as she spoke. "I have tried hard to act for the best, I have tried to do right. It is sad for me to give you up, but it would be much worse to marry you, and bring all the miseries and poverty upon you. You don't know what it is to be poor—I do, and it is dreadful, dreadful! I can never face it again, myself, much less bring it upon you; you will be grateful to me, some day, for saving you from it. You will find someone else, by-and-by, who will have some money, and who will not be such a clog on you as I should be. It would have been better for you to have married Janet! and, as for me, my fate is settled—and it is better as it is—"

"What does all this mean?" interrupted Kit suddenly, with a lowering brow. "What are you saying these things to me for? I am the best judge of what is good for myself—and what is the fate you have so comfortably settled for yourself?" A moment's pause, and then Violet very slowly drew off her glove, and silently laid her hand, with its sparkling load of diamonds, upon his sleeve. The action was perfect; it was almost dramatic. She had planned it over night, and she carried it out with the utmost finish in every detail of look and action. She had not, however, quite counted upon the effect of the little scene upon her audience. Kit caught her wrist with a violence for which she was little prepared.

"Ah!" he said with a long-drawn breath between his teeth, and then his whole face blazed up with a fury of scorn and rage. "So this is what you mean, is it? You have sold yourself for money to David Lennard, you poor, mean, base, contemptible creature."

"Don't, don't! you hurt me," she cried, really

frightened, and trying to free her wrist from his grasp.

"Hurt you! I wonder that anything can hurt you, you heartless, soulless thing. So, all along you have been angling for the rich lover, and turning the cold shoulder on the poor one, though you love him—for you know you do! Now I can see through you; now I can appreciate you fully, and upon my word, Miss Clayton, I am deeply grateful to you. I have had a real escape. I am very sensible for your forbearance in refusing the honour of my poor hand."

He dropped her wrist, and made her a low mocking bow, more galling to her than all his reproaches. With a cry of real pain, she covered her face with her hands.

"How harsh! how cruel you are!" she cried. "Why am I worse than you? Not five minutes ago you yourself acknowledged that you yourself wanted a rich wife. Every one marries for money now. You can't afford to marry a poor girl like me. Why is my engagement to Mr. Lennard more dreadful than was yours to Janet?"

Kit was silent. There are certainly many things which appear to a man perfectly simple and forgivable when he does them himself, but which seem to him positively revolting in a woman. Violet's argument was rather unanswerable. Kit turned away from her coldly.

"You will, of course, do as you like," he said; "but perhaps you will remember that when I proposed to Janet—for her money, of course, I will grant you that—I was not at the time desperately in love with some one else, as you are," he added, suddenly turning towards and bending down to look into her downcast face.

Violet sighed.

"Kit, let us part friends," she said, drawing near to him, clasping her hands together, and looking up into his face with her sweet eyes all heavy with unshed tears.

So lovely, so innocent, so touchingly piteous did she look, that he could not but relent and believe in her to a certain extent. And she meant what she said. She did not want to quarrel with him, she wanted to be friends with every one; and with him most of all. If she could have kept his love and married her rich lover as well, she would have liked it. She was determined not to marry Kit, but his caresses and words of love were infinitely dear to her.

"Don't quarrel with me. Let us be friends."

"Friends!" he repeated, a little bitterly, and yet moved somewhat by her sweet beauty and soft words, "how fond you women are of offering friendship to a man who asks for love! But you don't believe in it yourself. You know perfectly that no man worth caring for would accept such a bargain. No, Violet, I cannot be your friend, but your lover I am, and will be to the end of my life, whether you like it or no. I will leave you to your engagement with the rich man you don't care for, and it is my firm conviction that you never will carry it out; for you love me, Violet, and I think that when I am gone you will bitterly regret this morning's work."

"Why should you go? You don't mean to go?" she broke in excitedly.

"Yes, surely, I mean to go. I shall leave Lanfrew this morning."

"Oh! Kit, why not stay and let everything go on as usual?" she cried, in real dismay.

"And watch Lennard's love-making? Thank you, no. What can you be made of to dream of such a thing? Good heavens! what an extraordinary creature a woman is."

Violet began to cry softly. Kit Barrington drew her into his arms, and kissed her passionately once or twice; but he did not ask her again to marry him. Her character had possibly become too clearly revealed to him for that. But he whispered a few fond words in her ear, and, with a final "Good-bye, you selfish, worldly little beauty," he left her, and went into the house.

Kit Barrington did not appear at breakfast that morning. He went into his uncle's dressing-room before he came down, and saying shortly that his morning's letters called him to town rather suddenly, bade good-bye to him there and then, and was half-way to the station before pretty Violet, in her fresh morning dress, with every trace of tears wiped carefully away from her face, came down into the breakfast-room, where the rest of the party were already assembled.

CHAPTER X.

CONFESSIONS.

THREE days later, behold my heroine on her knees in Mrs. Barrington's little morning-room, her pretty hair all ruffled, her cheeks flushed, her eyes streaming with tears, her trembling hands clasped together with a pretty, deprecating earnestness.

"I never could have believed it of you, Violet—never!" her godmother was repeating excitedly for the twentieth time.

"How could I help his falling in love with me? Oh, please, please, don't be angry with me, dear Mrs. Barrington!"

"I had not the faintest suspicion of such a thing; and you knew all about Janet, too. Oh, Violet! how could you steal away another girl's lover?"

"Indeed, indeed, I was quite amazed at myself when he followed me out into the garden, and told me he loved me. I could hardly believe my ears, I was so astonished. I tried to refuse him, but I could not say no; I tried hard, but it gave me such a pain here;" and Violet pressed her little hands upon her heart with such a touchingly appealing look, that Mrs. Barrington began to forgive her at once.

"But I always thought he was so fond of Janet," she said, putting up her hand to her forehead in a puzzled way, for truly these young people's love affairs were sufficiently bewildering to her.

"He says he has not really cared much for Janet for a long time; you know she has treated him so badly," answered Violet.

"Yes, that is true," said Mrs. Barrington, musingly.

"And then—and then—oh, Mrs. Barrington, it sounds so conceited to say so—but he says from the first moment he saw me—that—that he could think of nothing else;" and Violet hid the rosiest of cheeks shamefacedly on her godmother's lap.

Just then there came a tap at the door, and

enter the happy lover, looking somewhat sheepish, as happy lovers often do.

"So my darling has made her confession?" he said, with rather a red face. "Are you going to forgive us both, Mrs. Barrington?" And David stooped down, and put his arm lightly round the kneeling girl; and as he did so, Violet shrank involuntarily, just a very little—so little that he never noticed it—from his caress. He held out his hand to Mrs. Barrington, and she could not do otherwise than take it.

"You are a couple of very naughty children," she said; "but I suppose we shall have to make the best of a bad business. You have behaved very badly to Janet, David; how do you suppose we are to tell her of this?"

"Janet has refused me dozens of times, as you very well know, Mrs. Barrington. I don't think she could expect to keep a discarded lover dangling on for ever."

"But I thought you were to settle it one way or the other during this visit?"

"Well, I have settled it the other way," he answered with a laugh. "Seriously, Mrs. Barrington, I have not spoken a single word to Janet on the subject since I came, and she evidently cares for me so little that I don't think, even if I had never seen Violet, that I could have married her. It will be very kind of you if you will tell her of this?"

"Oh yes, please do!" said Violet.

"Thank you, young people, for putting your dirty work off upon my shoulders! However, perhaps, it had better come from me."

Somehow or other during the course of that day Janet was told the news, and so was Mr. Barrington and Major Willet; so that before dinner-time every one in the house knew it.

Janet Maxwell said very little. She was very much surprised, quite taken aback; but she did not seem to be angry, as her aunt expected.

"You must send her home, aunt," she said; "you can't expect the same house to hold us both after this."

And though she looked and felt hurt and mortified deep down in her heart, she was glad and thankful that it was David Lennard who was Violet's declared lover, and not Kit Barrington, as she feared.

Mrs. Barrington could not well turn her niece out of doors; so she promised that she would send Violet back to her father for the present. Her month's visit was almost over, and it would be only right and proper that she should go home.

"But I can't be married from Sandhaven!" cried Violet piteously, when Mrs. Barrington told her her plans. "I have no mother you know, and I have grown to love you so well and to feel that my true home is with you; papa is so unsympathizing; you won't let me be married at Sandhaven?" she said, twining her hands round her godmother's arm, and looking up into her eyes with those sweet pleading eyes.

"No, no, my dear, you shall be married from Eaton Place, when I come back to town in November; you shall come up to me for a month beforehand; and Janet will be gone to stay with her father's family in Edinburgh, and she can stop away till after your wedding, and we must have quite a month to work at your trousseau; you must let me be responsible for that, my love!" she said, playfully patting her soft cheek."

"Oh no! dear Mrs. Barrington, you are much too good to me!" cried Violet, with faint deprecation, but of course it was just what she wanted; the wedding at Eaton Place, the trousseau all of the best and richest, the white satin and Brussels veil, the bridesmaids, the presents, it was all of course just as it should be; a flaming account of it all in the *Court Journal*, with description of the lovely bride, and a flourish of trumpets generally. With these golden visions Violet rocked herself to sleep, on the last evening of her stay at Lanfrew, and said to herself that all her wildest hopes and ambitions were about to be realized, and that now surely she was going to be intensely happy.

(To be continued.)

LYNXES AND THE LYNX-STONE.

BY PHIL ROBINSON.

THE lynx is a delightful wild beast, savage, carnivorous, and something of an assassin, as wild beasts should be—and all the more delightful for being European. We have so few picturesque ferine touches in the domesticated Nature of our civilized continent, that the lynx could hardly be spared. There is the wolf, of course—but the wolf is, perhaps, too serious an animal. Failing sheep, it will content itself with children. There is the bear too, but the bear is seldom in the way. Its habits are retiring; its diet, by preference, innocent. So that it cannot be considered a disagreeable addition to European Fauna. The lynx comes midway between the two. It has a taste for mutton, but would prefer the lambs coming into its private retreats to having to go and fetch them out of the public meadow. Now, when we speak of the ravages that wild animals commit, we forget that they are usually of our own prompting or creating. We set to work and cultivate a district, and populate it, driving out or exterminating the natural food of the beasts, and then fill large spaces with our own helpless "domestic" animals. After this, if the wild beasts eat these we exclaim against them, quite overlooking the fact that in most cases we have made such consumption a necessity of ferine existence, and in all have put temptation in the wild beasts' way in a most immoral manner.

And lynxes do not hesitate to avail themselves of their opportunities, and this with such wastefulness that they will kill far more sheep than they eat. But then beasts do not know any better. When they get amongst lambs they are like children among daisies, who murder the poor innocent flowers by thousands, leave them lying in heaps close by where they picked them, and go dripping daisies along the road all the way home.

For some reason or another these animals have acquired the reputation of an extraordinarily piercing eye-sight, and from the earliest times been credited with the power of seeing through opaque bodies. This fiction would appear to constitute its chief claim to poetical regard. "Watchful," Crabbe, Byron, Drayton, and others call it.

Thus parents also are at times short-sighted, Though watchful as the lynx.

Not is the epithet misapplied, for, like every

other species of cat, it is very watchful, and indeed in the patience of its ambuscades exhibits a somewhat special vigilance. So "calculation" is, poetically, lynx-eyed. It is the antithesis of the mole and bat. The prophet borrows its vision:

Now with a lynx-eye
I see, looking into future time,

says Cowper's Adam. From this reputed keenness of sight, "lynx" comes to signify a cruel eagerness in detection, as of officers of the Inquisition; and Keats by a curious form of, what may be called, metastasis makes the eyes which can see far be themselves seen from a distance.

As deep into the wood as we
Might mark a lynx's eye.

He does not of course mean a long distance, but the transference is worth noting.

Mrs. Hemans, referring to the Piedmontese variety, has the armed Jäger pursuing it

above the clouds of moru,

and there is probably no length to which the hunter, if he saw any chance of lagging it, would not follow such a quarry, for the lynx wears a very valuable and beautiful fur—said to be worth three times as much as the sable's—and is moreover a beast well worth the hunting if only for its endurance and courage. It is still to be found in Scandinavia, the greater part of Central Europe, and, of course, in Russia, and as one of the three beasts of prey, worth calling such—the other two being the bear and the wolf—deserves to be considered really notable.

But it is not, as is supposed, "untameable." The Gaekwar of Baroda has a regular pack of trained lynxes, for stalking and hunting pea-fowl and other kinds of birds. I have myself seen a tame lynx that had been taught to catch crows—no simple feat—and its strategy was as diverting as its agility amazing. It would lie down with the end of a string in its mouth, the other end being fast to a stake, and pretend to be asleep, dead asleep, drunk, chloroformed, anything you like, that means profound and gross slumber. A foot or so off it, would be lying a piece of meat or a bone. The crows would very soon discover the bone, and collecting round in a circle, would discuss the probabilities of the lynx only shamming, and the chances of stealing his dinner. The animal would take no notice whatever, but lie there looking so limp and dead that at last one crow would make so bold as to come forward. The others let it do so alone, knowing that afterwards there would be a free fight for the plunder, and the thief probably not enjoy it after all. So the delegate would advance with all the caution of a crow—and nothing exceeds it—until within seizing distance. Then it would stop, flit its wings nervously, stoop, take a last long look at the lynx to make sure that it really was asleep, and then dart like lightning at the bone. But if the crow was as quick as lightning, the lynx was as swift as thought, and lo! the next instant there was the beast sitting up with the bird in its mouth!

Now its procedure was very singular. It knew that it was no use jumping straight at the crow; it would be sure to miss it, and go under it. So at the moment that the bird darted at the bone, the lynx flashed up into the air, and caught the crow at the instant it had left the ground.

Next time it had to practice a completely different manœuvre. The same crows are not to be "humbugged" a second time by a repetition of the being-dead trick. So the lynx, when a sufficient number of the birds had assembled, would take the string in its mouth and run round and round the stake at the extreme limit of its tether as if it were tied. The crows, after their impudent fashion, would close in. They thought they knew the exact circumference of the animal's circle, and getting as close to the dangerous line as possible without actually transgressing it, would mock at and abuse the supposed-to-be tethered brute. But all of a sudden the circling lynx would fly out at a tangent right into the thick of its black tormentors and, as a rule, bag a brace, right and left.

Cowley has a very singular passage in one of his Juvenile Pieces, which is this:—

Let Cygnus pluck from the Arabian waves,
The ruby of the rock, the pearl that paves
Great Neptune's court; let every sparrow bear
From the three sister's weeping bark a tear;
Let spotted lynxes, their sharp talons fill
With crystal, fetch'd from the Promethean hill.

The reference here—the lynx bringing crystals—is to the old-world fable of the "lyncurium," a misnomer of the lapidaries of the time for "the Ligurian stone" (a repetition of the "g" in the Greek making the error of sound a very easy one) or "jacinth." This gem was supposed to be produced naturally by the lynx, that of the male being held in higher estimation than that of the female, as of purer colour and finer lustre. The jacinth is a lovely crystal, "much more agreeable and superior in tint to the best Brazilian topaz" (King's *Nat. Hist. of Gems*), but modern jewellers would appear to have confounded it with one of the garnets or cinnamon stones. The ancients, however, prized the "lynx-stone" highly and attributed to it strange potencies against jaundice and other ailments.

In European fables the lynx is rarely mentioned, its place being filled for minor affairs by the cat, for greater by the leopard. But it has its traditions. Its eyesight was considered so piercing that it could see through solid matter and long spaces of time, so that Lynceus, who could see three weeks ahead, and Apollonius' lynx that looked through the earth and observed the proceedings of the devils in hell, are quite within its legendary potentialities. Another Lynceus was one of the Argonauts, and discovered obstacles long before they were in sight, to the great advantage of the Heroes—as every schoolboy knows. The Lynx Academy of Rome took the name as significant of the depth and keenness of the insight into Nature to which, in their studies, they hoped to attain.

"WHEN AUTUMN'S LEAVES."

(From the Italian of Stecchetti.)

WHEN Autumn's leaves have fall'n, and thou dost bid

To seek my cross down in the churchyard lone,
In some deserted nook shalt see it lie,
And flow'rets sweet o'er it will then have grown;
Oh, cull them to adorn thy golden hair,
Those flowers born of my heart! I ween they were
The poems that I thought, but never sung,
The words of love ne'er utter'd by my tongue.

BARONESS SWIFT.

IN MEMORIAM—LONGFELLOW.

FEBRUARY 24, 1882.

SWEET singer of the New World's youth!
Thy words came to us o'er the sea,
In tones of wondrous melody,
And words that never failed in truth.

Two worlds have listened to thy song,
And loved thee for its noble tone;
The two have claimed thee for their own,
And to them both thou dost belong.

Through half a century of Time's night
Thou hast been teacher, brother, guide,
And many, walking by thy side,
Have struggled upward into light.

Toil-worn and lonely sons of earth
Have caught new hope from thy bold strain,
Have felt new strength in heart and brain,
And life, to which thou gavest birth.

And now, though thou hast gone before
Into the silent land of death,
Where all must go of human breath,
Thy voice still sounds from shore to shore.

Like a ripe shock of golden corn,
When reapers shout of harvest home,
So thou unto thy end didst come;
Thy death was but a newer morn.

Now art thou in the fuller light,
Where no earth-damp thy sight can cloud;
To us remain the cross and shroud,
To thee has come the glory bright.

J. FULLER HIGGS.

THE WIDOW'S BONANZA :

A LOVE YARN.

SPUN BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

CHAPTER I.

IN A LOG HUT.

THIS bit of a yarn of mine, hinges, as you might say, upon a widow. It revolves round a widow.

She was a very wealthy widow too, for her departed husband had left her, not only a plum, but a bonanza! Even at this moment I cannot say exactly how much of riches a bonanza represents, but I know it is something enormous. The widow in question owned—so they said—half-a-dozen silver mines out and out, or out and in, and she could hardly count the number of shares she held in gold ones. So it must be admitted she was a catch; she was really worth cocking one's Glen-garry at.

It was all arranged that I should marry this widow, and become the proud owner of her bonanza—for the Married Woman's Property Act had not then been read a third time. When I say it was all arranged that I should marry her, I ought to

add, between myself and Roddy McGruer, and this before I had ever clapped eyes upon her.

But Roddy had seen her and been introduced to her also, at a party in San Francisco, where his ship was lying at the time. His ship was also mine, a merchant barque; he was captain, I was the only passenger, and Roddy's friend and guest. As time was of little object just then to either of us, we had started North and East on a long camping tour, and at the end of three weeks found ourselves far away from civilization of any kind, proprietors *pro tem* of a log hut half-way up a rugged pine-clad mountain, and not far from a lake where fish

Sprang wanton to be caught.

The life we led was so completely suited to the tastes of both Roddy and myself, that we resolved not to permit even an approaching wedding—which he *must* attend—to interfere with our pleasures or cause us to break up camp.

So Roddy set off alone for San Francisco, and I held the hut till his return. I had my gun and fishing-rod, and plenty of books—what more did I want? There were wolves in the forest, but wolves don't attack human beings in summer; there was a stray grizzly not far off also—well, I only prayed he might appear in Roddy's absence, that I might lay his skin at my friend's feet when he returned, as a trophy of my prowess. There were Indians about too, but they were all friendly; so I read, and fished, and shot, and slept at night more sweetly and soundly than ever I have done since.

I was so sure that Roddy would return on the very day he promised, that I had an extra good dinner waiting for him, and sure enough just as the red sunset clouds, that were reflected so charmingly in the lake below, were beginning to change to purple and grey, the dear old man came toiling up the hill with an immense haversack slung over his shoulder on his gun. I knew, without being told, that there were plenty of good things in that sack, so after dinner I heaped more wood on the fire—for high up on these hills even summer nights are damp and chill—and Roddy and I sat down to enjoy our evening.

I wonder if I could give the reader any idea by pen and ink of the appearance of my friend Roddy, as he sat there beaming over the big meerschaum he held on to? I'll try. He had, then, white hair and a long snowy beard, a jolly rosy face with hardly a wrinkle in it, and eyes of pleasant blue, brimful of sincerity always, brimful of merriment and fun as often as not.

Was he an old man? No. That is the curious part of it. Albeit, his hair was like the peak of Ben Lomond on a winter's morning, Captain Roderick McGruer was barely five and forty.

Do you like the picture? But stay, you haven't heard Roddy speak yet.

Roddy was Irish.

Irish to the very backbone, and I don't care who knows it. For—and I am glad to have an opportunity of saying it—I have met with as much genial hospitality and as many genuine gentlemen in Ireland as ever I have done out of it. And I am not Irish myself either.

Probably, though I ought to apologize for Roddy's brogue, I am fully aware that educated Irishmen do not talk with a brogue, and that better English is spoken in Dublin than in

London, so you will call my friend a rough nut. Perhaps he was, but dear me! we should not judge nuts by the shell, but by the kernel. Roddy's heart was as innocent and kind as the heart of a little child.

"Well Roddy, my boy," I said, "I'm so glad you have returned. I was beginning to think the time just a trifle troublesome. Now we'll have six weeks of it at least, among these glorious hills. Did you enjoy yourself?"

"Sure enough, and I did then," said Roddy. "And what's more," he continued, "I met the richest and the nicest and the purtiest widow ever I clapped eyes on 'twixt Belfast itself and Ballaporeen."

"Don't let your pipe out, Roddy," said I; "but just heave round and tell me all about her."

Then Roddy told me all about the widow and her bonanza. He went into raptures over her beauty and over her wealth, and spoke as if he himself had the disposing of both her hand and her fortune.

"And sure," he said, "you'll be the happy man, when you marry her. Why, it isn't sailing the salt seas you'll be after that. And it is so proud you'll be, that you'll hardly walk on the same side av the street wi' poor Roddy."

"But my dear silly old man," I cried, "what nonsense you are talking. Even supposing I was willing to propose such a thing as marriage to this wealthy widow of yours, how sure are you she wouldn't show me the back of her hand?"

"Is it the back av her hand you're talking av?" he exclaimed. "Och! listen to the boy. Bedad! it is jump at the offer she would, she'd tumble straight into your arms, like a ripe pache, before the words were well out av the mouth av ye."

"You really think so, Roddy?"

"Saints! yes, my lad, I'm sure av it. What dy'e think widows are made av? Eh? Tell me that."

"Well," I replied, "I don't know, I haven't had a great deal of experience of widows. But if I actually thought——"

"Don't say another blessed word about it," interrupted Roddy. "It's all arranged. You're as good as married to her already. Shake hands with me. You're the luckiest dog in the world."

"If she be as nice, Roddy, as you say——"

"Howld your tongue till you see her——"

"Then," I continued, gazing meditatively at the spout of the little tin kettle, "a bonanza is certainly a fine thing; a fellow really could do a deal of good with a bonanza."

"I believe ye, my boy," quoth Roddy, "and faith, if I were only a hundred years younger, it isn't flinging the widow and her bonanza at your head I'd be, friends and all as we are."

Roddy pulled hard at his great meerschaum; my hand, with the cigar in it, dropped upon my knee, and I began to see pictures in the fire. The burning logs formed themselves into smiling valleys and glens, the white ash on them was the snow on the mountain tops, that towered skywards on the far-away horizon. There were beautiful fields, and waving forests, and lakes and streams, and all, all were mine. There was a cloudland of trees that rose and rolled over a hill, and in the centre smoke ascending from the broad chimneys of a noble mansion, and that mansion was mine. See! the trees part asunder like a screen, and I can

behold a park with deer in it, and rose gardens, and ribboned flower-beds, and terraces on which fountains were playing, and park and all were mine. Look! the snow is falling, and the green lawns grow crisp and white and the sun goes down; but lights stream out from rose-tinted windows, and I can hear the sound of music and happy voices within, and I long to be among them—for that pleasant home is mine.

Yes, all is mine, all that is pleasant and lovely in life, for what is it in this wide world that a bonanza cannot buy?

CHAPTER II.

RODDY'S RED HAIR, AND WHAT CAME OVER IT.

I DON'T know how long I sat there, dreamily gazing at the fire, but the life died out of the landscape at last, the snow crept farther and farther down the hillsides, the mountains themselves grew gray and black at last, and the rose tint fled from the valleys.

I started up with a slight shiver, and looked about for more wood. Roddy's head was thrown back—he was watching the smoke that curled upwards from his lips.

"Roddy," I cried, as I replenished the fire, "you are dreaming, my friend."

"Dreaming, is it?" said Roddy; "yes, yes—dreaming. An old man's dream."

"Nonsense, Roddy, nonsense; you're not an old man by chalks. Come, pull yourself together. Look at that glorious fire. Tell me a story, drink your *eau sucre*, and heave round with a yarn."

"Sure there isn't the ghost of a story in Roddy at all, at all," was the reply.

"Tell me something, anyhow. I don't mean to turn in yet for a whole hour. What made you go to sea? Were you ever in love? What made your hair so white?"

"I'll answer your questions all in a bunch," said Roddy. "I've been in love. Sure now you mustn't laugh at me when I tell you; *she* was only a child, and *I* was nothing else myself; but the love I bore her has never left me, and will light up my heart while life does last."

"Capital, Roddy. Go on. Was it this love which silvered your hair?"

"No, that was the rheumatiz."

"Rheumatism. Lor! how unromantic!"

"Will you hold your wheesht till I tell you? When I was a boy, then, it's a lovely auburn my hair was, but troth, my schoolfellows didn't hesitate to call it red. And I didn't hesitate to punch their heads for that same; but this only made matters worse, as you may well believe. It wasn't the boys I was caring for, anyhow, either back or fore, but a little colleen—such a sweet, wee, blue-eyed, sancy-nosed, cherry-lipped chick—a-biddy was surely never seen on earth before. I thought I would like to kias her. I dramed about it for months before I made the venture. But when my mind was made up at last, then I went straight away and borrowed a shilling, and bought a whole pound of charming swates, and went and waylaid her in a wood, coming home, all by her purty self, from school."

"My darling Aileen," says I, "your Roddy's heart is running over wi' the love that is in it for

you. And it's a whole pound of swates that I've bought, and I'll give you them all, eviry one o' them, for a single kiss."

"And what think you did she do? Why, she took the pound of beautiful swates as cool as a trout, and put them in her bag; then she tells me with a toss av her head:

"'It's only black-haired boys I like,' says she, 'and I would never kiss *Carrots*.'

"I went away home with a lump in my throat as big as a phaisent's egg. I read *Robinson Crusoe* for a whole week—then ran off to the sea.

"So that's an answer to one av your questions. And it was love that did it entirely. Love and carrots. Be jabers, it's the truth I'm telling you, I never looked into the glass, without cursing the colour o' those same carrotty locks.

"The boy is the father av the man. I grew up and up and up, till I was just as big as you see me now. And my hair grew redder than ever. But I never forgot little Aileen; I never could love another somehow. I never courted a girl with a view to marriage either, for fear of courting a rebuff, all along of my carrotty hair. But the time I might have spent, as most young men do spend their spare time, I devoted to my profession, and soon rose to be first mate of as purty a ship as ever carried a stuns'l-boom.

"Well, things throve with me wonderful-like, and before I was thirty I was master o' my own ship, and though it's myself that says it that shouldn't, there wasn't a smarter sailor ever stepped a quarter-deck—bar the red hair.

"But about this time I took a cargo out to Bombay, and was loading up with rice to return, when lo! and behold I was laid up with the faiver and rheumatiz. I couldn't move hand nor foot to save my life, so I was glad enough to get carried to hospital. The first mate took home the ship and there I was left on my back, and pretty nearly on my beam ends.

"It was months and months before I was able to get out av bed, and crawl to the window of my ward, to see how the world wagged without me. It was just after the rainy season and everything looked cool and green and beautiful. And there was the sun shining all by himself up in the blue, blue sky, as he never shines anywhere out av India, and down below were the houses with their painted and gilded walls, and the palanquins going hither and thither, and the buggies and the bheastie-wallahs* with their bags, and the cows and the crows, and the water-buffaloes, and Arabs in their robes, and the purty Hindoo maidens all dressed in green and crimson silk. Och! one and all av them put together made up such a picture that I nearly grew well on the spot.

"I soon felt a trifle weak though, and faint and chilly, and so I drew back. But now what with the glare av the sun, and all the brightness I'd been beholding I couldn't see much in the room, but I began to grope my way back to bed. When all at once—as sure as I'm alive—there, right foreinest me, stood

THE GHOST OF MY OWN FATHER, who had been dead and buried for ten long years. And the sorra a stitch had the ould man on him either, but a long white shirt that came down to his knees and a red Kilmarnock nightcap. 'What

have I to do, to be frightened at my father?' thought I to myself. But at that moment, faith! you could have floored me with a farthing candle, and never a taste av a prayer could I remember either.

"'Och! father,' I says, 'and it is out of the cowl'd grave you're coming, and all the way over from Oirland; to visit your sinful son?'

"But he never stirred, and henever spoke, though his lips were moving, and when I stretched out my hand to touch him, sure I found it wasn't my father at all, but my own image in the glass.

"And that was how this faiver had left me, as grey as an ould badger, as white as the snow, or near it.

"Had I been struck stone blind, I don't think it would have been a bigger blow to me; here was thirty years knocked off my life all at onct as you might say.

"Before I fell ill of the faiver, I used to go into society a bit, by way av diversion, and red-haired and all that I was, there was many a girl—haythen and Christian—that didn't object to let me say soft things to her. But now as soon as I got better all was changed, though I didn't find this out so much till after I left the Injies, and came back to England.

"I wasn't going to lay up for a white head anyhow, so I just went about as before. But now everybody 'old Roddied' me. It was old Roddy this, and old Roddy that; I was an old fogie, an old cock and a codger. 'You won't be going to this ball, Roddy?' one would say. 'Your dancing days are over Roddy, I dare say?' another would remark; and so on, and so forth, while, and after all, my legs and my heart were as young as anybody's, and it was only my hair that was old.

"I used to go courting now just to spite myself, and sometimes a girl would seem very soft on me, and maybe finish up by saying, it was far better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave.

"It was never a bit of use o' me sayin' that Smith was a year older than I, or that Jones only wanted six months o' my age. The girls didn't contradict me, it is true, but it was only for dacency's sake that they didn't.

"'Och! Roddy,' I used to say, as I shook my fist at my face in the glass—'Och! Roddy, you thundering ould idjit; isn't it time you were making your test'ment?'

"Before the faiver and the rheumatiz, my boy, Roddy used to be told off to take the prettiest girls down to dinner; now it was any toothless old maid, and if an ould lady of sivinty had a quarter of a mile to walk it was Roddy was sent with her, as certain as sunrise.

"What is it I wouldn't have given to get back my pristine locks, carrotty and all as they were? What indeed!

"Well, one fine morning I was reading the paper, when what should I see but an advertisement of some wonderful mixture to change grey hair to brown in the twinkling of an eye. 'Sold by all hair-dressers,' said the advertisement.

"I was starting for Cork to take a ship in a day or two, so I pitches the paper away, and 'Hurrah!' I cries, 'Roddy will get young again!'

"So that same evening down the strate I goes,

* Water-carriers.

and down another strate, and up a third, and at last I sees a barber's pole; so in I goes, and takes a seat in the chair.

"A shave, sir? Yes, sir; certainly, sir. Getting rather grey, aren't you?" he says presently.

"How could you take me to be then?" I says.

"'Bout five and twenty,' he says. 'Hair is nothing to go by.'

"I felt as proud as Lucifer, bedad.

"Like your whiskers trimmed, sir? Can I sell you a case of hair-dye, sir?" says he.

"Will it act, sir?" he says. "Why, certainly, sir. Thousands of customers, sir. Thank you, sir. Full instructions how to use it inside, sir. Good evening, sir."

"Back I goes to my private apartments, and there by the light of a pair of candles, I carried out the instructions to the letter, and goes to bed, after washing my hair, as happy as a king, and dreamed that all the girls were fighting for young Roddy, as they called me.

"The first thing I spied in the morning was the bath, my boy, that I'd washed my head in. What a sight! The sorra a bit blacker could the water have been had you been killing cuttle fish in it. Then I had a look in the glass. Oh! wurra, wurra; my own face was as red and rosy as ever, but my hair was as green as the leeks! No wonder my eyes glared out of the sun-reddened face of me. I was wild. I was mad.

"Och! Roddy, you rogue," I cried; "you murderin' consated ould villain. Of fanian proclivities too, which you daren't deny. It's often and often you've wished to see 'the green above the red,' and bedad, ye see it this blissed morning with a vengeance. And there's a smell of sulphur and brimstone all about too, that would make anybody believe the divil was in the room entirely."

"Well, Roddy, and what did you do?"

"What did I do? Why, sure I sent for a barber, and had my hair cut off, and wore a wig till it grew again. One lesson was enough for me, and I'll be old Roddy till the grave closes over me. But now, my boy, what about the widow and the blessed bonanza?"

"I've been thinking, Roddy," I replied, "that it really wouldn't be a bad plan after all for me to marry her. Meanwhile I'd like to turn in and dream about it. It's getting late, you know."

"The best plan out," said Roddy.

So both of us rolled ourselves up in our rugs, and lay down on our skin couches, and the first thing either of us was sensible of, was the sunlight streaming in through the chinks in the door, and falling on the floor, on the hearth, and the half-burned logs that lay thereon.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE THE LOVE COMES IN.

It was Roddy's turn to light the fire and make the breakfast—a fact I was not slow to remind him of—and while he got up and bustled around, I lay still, thinking, dreamily thinking, about that bonanza. I must confess that the widow herself was a mere secondary consideration.

"I say, you know," I said to Roddy, as we sat down to our meal of fried fish, camp-baked bread and coffee. "I say, Roddy, my boy, we must not go like a bull at a gate in this bonanza business."

"To be sure not," replied Roddy; "but hay must be made while the sun shines; the iron must be struck while the iron is hot."

Indeed, my friend wanted to break up the encampment at once and hie off to 'Frisco, but I wouldn't hear of such a thing. Life was far too pleasant where we were, and the widow would keep. So I thought.

About a week after, Roddy and I were returning about sunset to our hut, tired with a long day's gunning, and carrying in our bags the fruits of the chase. Bang, my Irish setter, rushed on in front of us up the hill, but almost immediately returned barking. Then we observed, to our surprise, that smoke was issuing from the one chimney of our log castle.

"Indians, evidently," I said; "but they are taking it coolly."

"Sure, and you're right," said Roddy.

It was no Indians, however, but an old trapper, who had come all the way from 'Frisco with a letter for Roddy—a letter from his newly-wedded friend.

Poor Roddy tried to speak after reading it, but he failed; so he seized me by the coat, and dragged me forth, and thrust the letter into my hands.

"Yes," it ended, "after your glowing description of camp-life, nothing will satisfy my wife but coming out to spend the tail-end of our honeymoon at your log-hut. So get ready. We'll be with you five days after you receive this. Mrs. Morrack is coming with us."

"Hurrah!" cried Roddy, skipping around like a last-season lamb. "Hurrah! Mrs. Morrack is coming!"

"Who is Mrs. Morrack?" I asked.

"Didn't I tell you, man? It's the widow, she is: the widow with the bonanza."

I confess I was every bit as much excited as Roddy now.

The widow was coming!

The bonanza was going to arrive!

Five such busy days I had never spent in my life before. The old trapper stayed with us, and proved invaluable. We built a new hut; we glorified and improved the old one. We made a splendid archway over the doorway, and laid down green boughs for the dainty feet of the bride to tread upon. We found out a little alcove some distance from the huts on the hillside, and turned it into a rustic summer arbour; and we constructed a winding path to it also, so that, when finished, Roddy declared the whole thing was as complete

As a coach and six or a feather bed.

They didn't arrive on the fifth day, but they did on the sixth. Roddy's friend Woolmar, his young and pretty bride, the widow Morrack, horses and mules, servants and sacks, bags and baggage and all.

I declare in honesty I never spent so jolly a time as that fortnight. We were all as happy as children. The bride was delighted with everything; we walked and talked, and hunted and fished, and feasted and flirted, and sang.

And the widow? Ah! yes, the widow. She was all that Roddy had described her. She was young, beautiful, divine. She wore no crape or grave-yard decorations, but light was the prevailing colour of her dress; light and airy, as became that bright, sunshiny, summer weather.

I settled down to serious flirtation from the very first. I constituted myself her chaperon, her knight, her servant, her slave. I'm not sure I didn't fall in love with her out and out—I believe I did. Was it any wonder? Consider the situation and the surroundings. The lovely scenery, the lovely weather, the waving woods, the lake on which we rowed, the widow herself—all tulle and gauze, and silken fringe, and fair soft hair. A witching bonnet, an odour of new-mown hay, smiles, dimples, a saucy nose, bluest of eyes, alabaster teeth and—the bonanza!

Dear old Roddy; he left us as much alone as was possible. The widow herself noticed it. She told me one day that she didn't think my friend liked her—because he seemed always to avoid her. But always, when Roddy got me alone, he used to ask how things were progressing.

"Fairly well, I think, Roddy," I used to tell him.

"Well, heave round," then Roddy would answer.

"You see," I said one day, "I'm afraid to be too precipitant. Precipitancy might spoil everything."

"Fiddlesticks!" was Roddy's reply. "Precipitancy is the best mixture out for a widow. Take my advice, my boy. Go for a moonlight row on the lake to-night. Get well into the centre av the water, then let the boat drift and lave the rest to Nature."

I might have taken Roddy's advice, only a summer storm came on that night; the moon was seldom seen, the lake was white with breaking waves, and the tall pine trees bent like reeds and snapped before the force of the gale. So we spent the evening in general jollity in the log hut.

Next day the only mementos of the storm were the fallen trees. The day was bright and sunny, and the sun soon dried the ground and grass. In the afternoon I happened to be extended, book in hand, close behind the arbour, when I was aroused from a kind of reverie, by the sound of voices inside the little bower. I listened, I couldn't help it.

"Sit down," said Roddy—it was he—"excuse my freedom. It's a few years older than you I am, faith. What a sweet evening it is—isn't it, my dear?"

"Yes," replied the widow laughingly, "but I'm sure, Captain McGruer, you didn't bring me here merely to tell me that."

"Well—ahem!—well, no—to be sure, it wasn't. What an old fool I am, sure-ly!"

There was a pause—an awkward one for Roddy, I felt certain. But presently he went on again—

"You see, my dear—nay, don't start, and don't blush—there is nobody here to listen but your purty self. Well, you see, it's a saicret I'm going to tell ye."

I felt mad with Roddy just then. What right had he to go and make love on my behalf? Was I a child, that I couldn't tell my own story when

I got a good chance? To be sure, I wasn't. I had a good mind to cough, and reveal my presence; but I didn't. After all, Roddy, poor, dear innocent soul, was doing it for the best.

"Yes, it's a saicret," he said, "and it's only known to two as yet."

"Oh, do tell," sighed the widow; "don't tantalize, Captain."

"Well, then, you swate, purty thing, what would you say if there was some one dying for ye entoiely—some one thinking av ye every blessed minute o' the day, and draming of ye every night on his pillow?"

"Bravo, Roddy!" I thought.

"It would be very nice," simpered the widow.

"Some one," Roddy continued, "who is choking to tell of the mountains of love that are burning like volcanoes in his buzzom."

"Go on," said the widow. "It would be delicious."

"Some one who has no thought av happiness that doesn't centre in you—some one who doesn't care a farthing rushlight for anybody in the wide world but yourself—some one who never sees the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, when you're near him—some one who doesn't feel the taste o' the mate he is ating when you're sitting at the table foreninst him—some one, sure, who would gladly devote a whole life-time to—to keeping your little toes warm?"

"How prettily you can make love, Captain!" said the widow. "And some one really loves me as much as all that?"

"Och, yes, and a deal more. It's meself that has no words to describe the love that is ating up the heart av him, till it's disappearing by degrees, like a copper nail in a bottle of vitriol."

"I know it—I know it," sighed the widow. "I have eyes, Captain McGruer, and they are woman's eyes. I know and see that he loves me, though he is very shy about it, and often has seemed to avoid me. And now, Captain, why should I hesitate to speak the truth? I reciprocate his affection. My heart—a heart that warmed to him on the first day I saw him—my heart is his, and his only."

Here my heart gave a great thud of delight—the bonanza would be a certainty, after all. I wanted to jump and dance for joy, but I was compelled to keep still.

"Hurrah!" I heard Roddy exclaim. "Sure this is the happiest day in my life. And what a happy little darlint of a woman you'll be yourself! I'll be off, and tell my friend at once that you love him—that you'll marry him—that—Why, my dear, whatever is the matter with ye at all at all?"

"Captain McGruer!" the widow exclaimed, excitedly. "Oh, Captain, your friend! That—man!"

And now there was the sound of convulsive weeping in the arbour.

"Saints be about us this blessed day!" Roddy cried; "but by all the powers, what does it mane at all? Sure I don't know whether my ould head or my heels are uppermost."

"Weren't you," sobbed the widow, "weren't you—ma—a—aking love—on your—own account?"

I had listened long enough. A thought came

to me like an inspiration, and I acted on it at once.

I boldly entered the arbour.

"Mrs. Morrack," I said, "I have heard all. I did not listen intentionally, but I have listened. Now let me tell you that though I have dared to love you, this generous friend of mine—don't you dare to interrupt me, Roddy—loves you too; but he would have sacrificed his own happiness to mine. That is the truth, Mrs. Morrack, and you will be happy together, I know, for that big manly heart of his can love you more in five minutes than I could have done in fifty years. Your hand, dear Roddy; yours, Mrs. Morrack. There——"

The widow smiled through her tears as I placed her little hand in Roddy's, and said in a heavy-father tone of voice—

"Bless you, my children!"

As for Roddy, I never saw him so taken aback in my life before.

But, nevertheless, in less than a month Roddy McGruer became the husband of the Widow Morrack, and the Widow Morrack became Mrs. McGruer.

I never saw much signs of a bonanza though. Only Roddy ceased going to sea, and settled down into a quiet old English gentleman.

But, dear reader, a bonanza after all is neither here nor there, if a man gets a woman who loves him! Let Bobbie Burns reply—

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, and pleasure;
The bonds and bliss o' mutual love,
Ah! that's the chief o' warld's treasure.

WITCHCRAFT.

LIKE whispers of sunny lands,
Where earth's deep heart is gay,
She touches the world with artist hands,
And changes the night to day.
She changes to golden day
The night of a long despair,
And sings the echo of birds in May
On the chill December air.

She scatters the rarest flow'rs,
On the mountain's rugged breast,
She gives bright wings to the creeping hours,
Which die in the purple west.
She steals from the glowing west,
Its tints so bright and warm,
Till earth grows soft as a thrush's nest,
And fair as a dewdrop's form.

On the hard and sterile ground,
A mystic spell she throws,
Till it yields with a throb of joy profound
The blush of a crimson rose.
Like the breath of a moss wreath'd rose,
Are her words so low and sweet,
Which the woodland stream as it gaily flows,
Strives vainly to repeat.

Who knows where she gained the power
To weave her wond'rous spells?
Perchance 'twas a bright-hued rainbow's dower,
Or caught from the fairy bells.

The rhythm of fairy bells
With secret wealth is fraught,
Like the light that streams through the captives'
cells,
And beareth a holy thought.

Or beneath the forest boughs,
Where beauty reigns supreme,
From the deeper meaning of lovers' vows,
In a sweet enchanted dream—
In a sweet enchanted dream
Of flow'rs that ne'er could fade,
The secret came on a starry beam,
Which stole through the leafy shade.

But the charm of her maiden youth,
No matter whence it came,
Is pure as worship and strong as truth,
And burns with a sacred flame;
It burns with a holy flame
Of noble thought and deed,
The base belief and the sordid aim,
And the lust of grasping greed.

Her earnest thought she veils
With light and airy jest,
Like the graceful foam which gaily sails
On the ocean's heaving breast.
But the ocean's heaving breast,
Has hidden wealth and might,
And her secret soul to the stars confess'd
Is strong as an eagle's flight.

Her bosom fair and white
Is pure as a hallowed shrine,
The dainty home of a fancy bright
As the wreaths the fairies twine.
As the wreaths the fairies twine
To fashion a floral crown,
Or stars men fancy coldly shine,
Which gaze in pity down.

The smile of her soft sweet mouth,
Is a dream of rosy hue,
And fair as flow'rs in the jewelled south,
Are her eyes so bright and blue.
For her eyes so bright and blue
Are vocal with rapid light,
The gleam of a mind whose thoughts are true,
And a soul whose wings are white.

ALFRED LEIGH.

PASTEL :

A STUDY IN MONOCHROME.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON,
Author of "Meadow Sweet," &c.

CHAPTER III.

LUCK IN A MODEL.

"TWO of my pictures were accepted. There was a glut of pictures that year, want of space compelled them to decline one. So at least the note emanating from the Academy gave me to understand. I was exhilarated but not unduly so; I could bear the return of one with fortitude. But times were not good; there were so many shown, I was afraid the two accepted would remain unsold

at the close of the exhibition. Every one said it was an awful time, dealers were full. Croesuses had become Belisariuses. I kept a good heart, the sun had shone upon me and I was grateful. But I was perfectly alive to the fact that much depended upon the sale of those pictures. The morning of view I set out from home with mingled feelings. They might be skied or inordinately low. I provided myself with a few colours and a long stick, should distance need a little more enchantment. But on the way I was credibly informed that they were hung low, though not on the line. On the whole I was satisfied. People would have to stoop to examine them, that was all. How comforting a possession is philosophy!

"When I got into the room I observed a knot of fellows congregated at a particular spot. 'There is an attraction this year,' thought I, 'who can it be?' I had lived so much like a hermit since my return to town that I knew nothing of what was stirring, and the papers are not always informed of possible sensations. Some of the fellows I recognized. I observed a dealer or two, and there was a sprinkling of those young fellows who hang upon the skirts of the profession, fellows who have taste and some capacity if they would exert themselves, but who are indolent and careless because they have been born with the traditional silver spoon. They are friendly critics and button-hole you, telling you that they are going to set to in sober earnest and work out something which will make a reputation. I was curious enough to approach the knot of fellows before I essayed to look round for my own. Before I reached them my ears were assailed with jerky sentences from more than a dozen pairs of lips. One caught my ear—'Hallo, Pastel, these are yours, I presume?' I saw then that a few fellows were crouching and kneeling upon the floor. One of them rose, dusting his knees—'They are clever!' exclaimed he, either not seeing me or pretending that he did not; 'mark my word, Pastel will go up to the top of the tree.' He has certainly produced a pair of good pictures,' murmured a quiet voice behind me. 'Gentlemen,' I answered, disposed to be nettled, 'I can't stand chaff.' I really was vexed, for I fancied there was mirth in some of the faces, and I imagined there was a something deficient in the pictures they had one and all seized upon. It was a ridiculous supposition of mine, for the brotherhood, whatever be their faults, are not unkind and ungenerous. At my reply every countenance became grave. Then a puzzled look stole over most of the faces about me. They saw that I was serious and put out. 'What modesty!' cried an irrepressible butterfly, disturbing the silence; 'I say, fellows, he would have us believe he sets but a light opinion on his work. Oh, you Pastel!' There was a roar of laughter. 'I assure you, Pastel, we are in earnest.' I turned, it was the quiet voice, and I recognized a man whose opinion counts. I bowed my acknowledgment, and a moment after joined in with the laugh, when the youngster who had spoken before, exclaimed: 'Why the man's mad, he thought we were taking a rise out of him.'

"What is—oh, this is Mr. Pastel! a person unknown to me spoke in a whisper. Beckoning me aside, he continued in the same low tone: 'what is your price?' 'For which?' I asked. 'For each?' 'Fifty pounds,' I answered promptly,

aghast almost at my audacity. 'I'll take them,' he returned without the slightest hesitation. 'I will give you a cheque now.'

"Sold! was the interjection from several lips. 'Quick business! faith!' The little transaction had indeed been rapid. The dealer, for such I discovered him to be, quickly placed the matter beyond dispute. I actually began to regret my haste. He had given me all that I asked, and like a mercenary Jew I began to grieve that I had not asked more. I had reason to do so. 'Sold, did you say?' echoed a voice in the background; 'the deuce, sold before exhibition? No! Why there has scarcely been time to ask the price!' My purchaser having complacently concluded the business had proceeded to view others. 'Pastel, what have you got for them? They are to go to Manchester; now come, Pastel, what price have you made?' There was no shaking off the disappointed man. He was hipped, I could see, at being forestalled. The Manchester man had been too nimble for the Londoner. But perhaps the nimble nineness had deprived me of the possible shilling. 'I say, Pastel,' interrupted an artist friend, tapping me upon the shoulder, 'where did you find your model?' 'Oh,—but I could not answer him for volleys of other questions. My querist at my elbow too was persistently, doggedly murmuring in my ear, 'Pastel, I say—what—have—you—got—for them?' I saw that I should have no peace until I satisfied him. 'Where is he? Where is the man gone?' cried he. 'Yonder he stands,' replied I, pointing to my purchaser. 'Why didn't you come to me, set me a price—sell me them?' complained he. 'How did I know that you would be disposed to purchase?' I returned, almost dazed with the man's eagerness. 'Well,—I caught the expression in the London dealer's face. 'No, I could not do that. I could not act with any turpitude. The affair is completed. I hold the cheque.' 'Here, come along, let us go to him; he may not be disinclined to relinquish them. If he is, I will take them off his hands. Pastel, can't you get him to take back his cheque? Come now, I will give you eighty if he will—' I believe he would have gone to a hundred; I answered him with a simple shake of the head, perhaps a mournful one, for sixty pounds was an object to me.

"The Manchester man was obdurate, all his London rival's feints went for nothing. Perhaps I did look a little rueful; perhaps I carried in my face a certain shamefacedness bearing my companion company. Anyway, fancying my purchaser eyed me a little indignantly, I attempted to exonerate myself. I turned to the London dealer and said cheerfully, 'I told you, Mr. Whichold; but if you are emulous, I have another at home; it was sent for exhibition, and only passed over for want of space. You can have it; you shall have it at your own price.' 'Can I have a view of it to-day? I have an object wishing to see it to-day,' he returned briskly. 'You can have it at your own gallery within the half-hour.' 'That will do nicely; I will meet you there.' 'I was not aware there was a third of the series,' began the Manchester man. 'I wish you had mentioned that to me, Mr. Pastel.' 'Well, the fact is, I didn't think of it.' 'Can I see it?' 'I must show it to Mr. Whichold; I have told him he can have it, you see; but if he

beats me down in price, which I think most unlikely, I shall be happy to show it you.' 'I cannot press you,' he said considerably.

"I thought of Byron, sleeping in obscurity, waking to find himself famous. Here I was almost quarrelled over. It was only a matter of taking my picture to Mr. Whichold's gallery and receiving an equivalent in Bank of England notes. I thought he should know that I had another purchaser if he showed a disposition to eat his own words. But he met me so generously, I was silent on the matter until the purchase was completed. Did I not return home in high feather? I did not acquaint Janet all at once of the turn affairs had taken. I simply said as if nothing had stirred me, 'Janet, make your purchases, you and the cherub must have a little country or sea air, which you prefer.' She was vehement in her objections. She was sure that town air suited her and the little girl better than the much vaunted country air, or sea air even. But then the little woman was so dense. She thought I had become a little touched (here Pastel's finger tapped his forehead) with close application. 'Nonsense, Janet,' I said, 'you don't know what you are talking about.' Actually when she learned all, she was still bent on foregoing all change. 'We can put the money by for a rainy day,' she suggested parsimoniously. 'Now, Janet,' I said to her sternly, 'I shall be vexed if you persist in such nonsense. Here I am on the high road to fortune, or what looks like it; if I cannot afford a few pounds to brace the child up, it is a pity. She has been cooped up here like a little captive. You are an unfeeling woman, Janet.' She actually began to whimper, so I had to belie myself with a smile and the little woman took heart, her mind projecting her, I could see, into a street where a favoured *modiste* tempted her weak sisters. When Janet had gone, I worked on manfully. There must be no dawdling when once recognized. I looked up my model; then it occurred to me that I must not do the thing to death; there must be a change of subject; ah, there they hang yet. Lawless, if in your travels you should meet with a connoisseur desirous of a few gems—not paste, you know, but paint—at a not exorbitant price, bring the friend of neglected artists here."

"I don't see—I inferred from your opening statement that there was a story attached to them."

"Have I not led up to them? You are so impatient my dear fellow. I am proceeding with my story. Now what I am about to tell you I have never before divulged. We come to my model, the model that gave life and spirit to my work; I picked her up casually in the street. I imagined she was a little Italian girl, or that she was of Italian parentage. She was a very reticent maiden, the little English she spoke was perfect enough. I was greatly taken with her; had she been my own child I could not have felt more tenderly disposed towards her. Ah, Lawless, I lost a child who would have been about her age. You won't be surprised if I behaved somewhat like a Don Quixote when I saw my little model abused in the street after leaving my house. I went out, and as the brute was insolent I knocked him down. There was a strange to-do, a crowd gathered; I had to go before a magistrate; he did not get off scot free. The worst of it was the

affair got reported in the papers, and Janet took a crass view of the fracas. She came home immediately. You know my little woman has an opinion of her own and is hard to convince. She actually would have had me destroy those pictures. I only got out of my difficulty assuring her that if I again required a model, I would be content with her. She is a model of a wife, I must admit," he said, fatuously; "she does suffer me to do thereabouts as I like; she doesn't mislay my traps and be eternally setting things 'to rights,' which means putting everything in undiscoverable places. Anyhow, debarred from youthful models—for you know I flatter myself the female face is my forte—I did not take so kindly to work again. And as it happened, a good offer came from a publisher to illustrate a serial and I closed with it. It led to other commissions. But there was another little thing at that time to sour me—you remember Mauler who did the criticisms for the *Knout* now defunct, you know; he promised to give me a line. On the strength of his promise he came to hunt me up. He was in a temporary difficulty, but not so embarrassing, the loan of ten pounds would relieve him. I should not have hesitated, being flush of money. He had borrowed before, and I will say he had always remembered his obligations sooner or later. But the foolish fellow had the temerity to open out his budget to Janet. Janet is so very outspoken, I am sure she must have offended him. He kept the promise made to me, and I was thunderstruck to find such a startling critique on my style. It was not handsome of the fellow, but I could forgive him; he had left his trouble to the eleventh hour, depending upon me. We had it all over after, and he was regretful enough. He always was a hot, impetuous mortal if put out of his way. But to return. I find I can subsist comfortably at bookwork, and practice makes one facile. A new process has come up and I have been initiated into the mysteries. It is to revolutionize wood engraving, but between you and me, I don't believe it. It may do for show-card work. I am engaged on a Christmas picture now for the firm that has taken out the patent. I want a face now of a certain type—to tell you the truth, Lawless, I went into Hatton Garden to-day, thinking it just possible I might meet with something—that Italian girl, she will be grown older of course, but I don't want a young child's face—"

"Pastel is bewitched," I thought, "and his wife is not so far away from the truth. She certainly ought not to leave him by himself. He is a little 'lunny.' He always has believed in ghosts, people reappearing after death—I shouldn't wonder if he isn't an out-an-out spiritualist."

Remembering my copy, I looked at my watch; the intelligence on its dial so confounded me that I snatched up my hat, scarcely framing an excuse for my precipitation. I was through the door in an instant.

"My dear fellow," cried the amazed Pastel after me. "What has come to you? Let me show you out, the passage is not well lighted."

His words reached me as I was recovering myself; I had tripped over some frayed matting that certainly needed repair. I heard his voice as I descended the staircase. "You haven't hurt yourself, have you, Lawless? I told you to wait, you know; look in again I say, first opportunity. I

have something else to tell you—Shaffleton was in the other day. You and he were inseparable at one time."

CHAPTER IV.

NOMADS.

THERE is a melancholy if not tragic episode in many a man's life. Those who have the brightest faces, the most genial hearts, the most gracious manners, the tenderest consideration for others, seem to be singled out for the arrows of outrageous fortune. When at their brightest—amid the festive throng—when dull care is supposed to be charmed away, a dark wave of sadness comes to dash all joyousness and forgetfulness. Some careless word, some allusion, or some striking face has raked or called up remembrance, and the wound barely cicatrized, bleeds or smarts at the touch. It is not the veil that is moved aside gently that lacerates; sometimes there is consolation when the hand is tender and the heart not unfeeling. The sufferer winces when the hand is rough and unskilful, and the heart dull and thoughtless. I almost shrink from the recital of a grievous episode in Pastel's life. As there are certain accidents in life we cannot be held answerable for, so there are certain elements in our composition which excuse us for plunges, which certain persons of steadier mould and quicker perceptivity would hold unpardonable and suicidal. Tom's choice of a profession was a blunder; Dick's hasty marriage was foolish in the extreme, and so on. Pastel's marriage was a fatal mistake. No person endowed with common sense would have dared to marry as, whom, and when he did. What could he expect? But according to his own confession from his earliest youth Pastel was a susceptible fellow. A glance from a fair siren's eyes, and Pastel a victim fell before the arrow of flame. He had several hair's-breadth escapes. Janet the irascible was Pastel's second wife. Pastel had acquainted her, before he asked the fatal question, that he had been married previously, but he entered into no prolix narrative of his earlier marital experience. He shrank from doing so. Once only had Janet endeavoured to draw aside the curtain shrouding the bygone period of her husband's life, but Pastel's pain-drawn features and agitated voice caused Janet to experience something akin to remorse. Her curiosity was natural and excusable. She had to be content with his admission that his first bond was anything but silken, and that allusion to it only caused him pain. Janet was not without a heart; she had refrained when she saw that her husband shrank at the probe. She had fathomed his gentle nature; she was assured that not even the memory of a first attachment shared her empire, and, like a woman of sound sense, she did not press her point. Janet was often tart; scarcely any of Pastel's friends viewed her appreciatively; she had little "romance" about her; she called it "fudge;" perhaps she was voted a virago. The earth is a hard crust, but it has warm fires below its surface.

I did not wholly desert Pastel, and I, in conjunction with one or two of his chosen intimates, was in possession of the full, true, and lamentable

history of the shadowy epoch in our poor friend's peculiarly erratic life.

Twenty years before Pastel led his second wife to the altar in that smudgy little church, now removed, in the vicinity of Holborn, Pastel committed himself to the tender mercies of a weaker vessel. (I speak advisedly; no woman can take exception to the phrase, for she will hear it, if she has not heard it, in that service which begins—and no discovery of mine—with "dearly beloved," and ends with "amazement"). And this first marriage was one of the purest romance. I might dismiss it in a sentence, but I consider it would leave a contrary impression to the one it ought to leave. Pastel at that time travelled with a troupe of acrobats. The fair one whom Pastel married was one of the company, daughter and granddaughter of a clown, herself an *artiste* of no mean ability. If she was not born under canvas, she had little conception of anything lying outside it. The ring of thrown up turf, the smell of naphtha and sawdust were as the breath of her nostrils. But, according to Pastel, she was so far superior to the ordinary run of her sisters in the profession, that pity as much as love constrained him to offer her his masculine protection and attachment. She would be happier, he believed, removed from the glare and glitter of the artificial life; he believed that its meretriciousness was only too manifest to her. Pastel had struck up a warm friendship with the girl's old grandsire, whose only tie on earth she was. The old man's only comfort in his declining years was a patient listener to his brag of past triumphs, or of those happiest days when he listened with a father's pride to his son's original quips and cranks, and witnessed his boy's marvellous tumbling. Pastel was a patient listener. He gathered that during the son's life the old man had been content to hang about the ring, retained a veteran on the strength of past service in the profession. That when the son died, leaving a motherless child, the old clown was constrained to pull himself together, don his motley again, and resume "business," for his boy's girl had to be brought up. He was allowed to slide into his son's vacated place, and the old man again in the ring cracked his older jokes and disported himself, determined to be deaf to creaking, rebellious joints. He would defy insidious age. Paint and his bags deceived the greenhorns, and he wished to deceive himself. He contrived to keep outside of the bickerings and jealousies so incidental to the profession, and he met with great kindness as well as pity and respect from every one.

But this could not go on for ever. The time came when the poor old fellow felt that he must soon retire from active service, that the *call* would come from the great Master, and his Nellie be left alone in the wide, wide world. He had educated her, or caused her to be educated, according to his lights. She need not fear the wolf, but a girl must not be friendless if a nomad. In a despondent moment he confided his trouble to the young artist, who had travelled the summer with the company. The old man had hungered for some one to talk it over with. Pastel appeared at an opportune moment. Pastel, whose heart was easily touched, promised to keep an eye on her so long as he was with the company. Nellie had been brought into association with him through his intimacy with her

grandsire. Perhaps Pastel's kindly speech and chivalrous bearing had not gone for nothing. Nellie would often linger by when the two friends were talking, she would join in their colloquys, shyly at first; she was not an uninteresting or disinterested listener. Pastel had viewed Nellie with more than ordinary interest. She was handsome, modest. Had she been reared in a most exclusive family, her delicacy could not have been greater, so Pastel decided. She showed no repugnance to him; she had overcome her first shyness with him. The old clown's confidence was as the spark to the tinder; Pastel's interest in her, scarcely then to be defined by himself, began to assume grave proportions. He caught himself thinking of her tenderly, watching her movements, waiting for her exits. She eventually began to lean upon him, expect him at the dressing-van, to seek his counsel in her perplexities. What more natural than that all this should ripen into love. Pastel began to speculate upon his future; to feel some repugnance for his Bohemian life, for her Arab life, that she should be constrained to obtain her livelihood in the way she did. At last bronchitis carried off her natural protector and most faithful guardian, and precipitated matters. Pastel cast reserve to the winds and unfolded to her his plans. She did not turn a deaf ear to his pleading, she consented to become his wife, and sever her connection with the circus. If like Lot's wife, she did look back and linger regretfully, it was not observed by Pastel. She did perhaps honestly imagine that a life without daily demand would be less irksome. He believed that she freely relinquished her vocation, only too happy to subside into a life, the only call upon her the cultivation of domestic virtues. Pastel knew that he would himself soon be open for another engagement, for every van had been pictorially treated. He was engaged on his last job, a huge transparency that was to hang at the entrance of the hippodrome. Pastel had had enough of migration. He determined to make his pitch in the town where they were married, and open out as portrait painter. It was an old cathedral town with a fair sprinkling of *nouveaux riches*. There had been a great mineral find in the vicinity, and people were making money fast, even the small shopkeepers. Now began for him a fight for life. At first no one seemed to care for portraits, and he had a chequered existence for some few months. He had poverty to contend with, and his wife did not bear it well. Happily these dark days were illumined with gleams of good fortune. Then there came a glut of work, and like other men of his stamp, perhaps Pastel was reckless for the time being. He "made hay while the sun shone," forgetting the adage he was to learn from Janet, of "laying by for a rainy day." As may be imagined his fair equestrienne made but an indifferent housewife. Living from hand to mouth and in poor lodgings from her infancy, she had not even the rudimentary knowledge of house-keeping, consequently the artist and his wife lived a life of Bohemianism of the most extreme type. The wonder was they did not succumb to dyspepsia, or some such kindred malady. They worked the town out at last, and moved on and on. Children came to them, to die in their infancy, finally Pastel reached London with one child apparently of a more robust nature than its predecessors. One would have thought the common

fight would have endeared wife and husband to each other. In the hard battle of life, when the victory is won, in the shape of recognition, the artist and his dearest appreciator take sweet comfort in talking over the strong points assailed, the disheartening reverses tided over, the key of the position discovered. Pastel did not go so far as to admit plainly that he regretted the step that he had taken, but in a bitter moment confession was wrung from him that only the first year of his wedded life approached the Elysian. He had long discovered that his wife had discarded her profession reluctantly, that year by year she pined more and more for the canvas and the garish lights, the ever changing location. The wilful spirit of the girl, that gave a charm to her every movement, merged in the woman into something like vulgar obstinacy and rebellion. Pastel became despondent, his wife's constant ill-temper worried him, her unmerited reproaches stung him to the quick. Courting peace he too often gave way to her whims, even when his common sense warned him that it was his duty to be firm. Had he been firm and resolute at the outset it is just possible he might have nipped in the bud the early symptoms of insubjection. But such a line of argument may be fallacious. If the spirit of contrariety, or evil or any vicious tendency exist in a human being, it is no light matter engaging oneself to counteract or eradicate it. Persons can vamp and preach when they do not stand in a sufferer's shoes. There is a saying that you must ask your wife if you are to live. The years rolled on, and Pastel found one year much as another, only his thorn more and more an infliction. He improved in his art, his portraits commanded higher prices, the dealers began to look at his more ambitious efforts, but his life was a burthen to him. The antagonism of his wife developed, he had to contend with a deeper misery, she gave way to the habit of self-indulgence. He moved from house to house, from suburb to suburb, but wherever he went he was disgraced. He reached the point when he would no longer be seen with her, it was idle of him attempting to govern or restrain her. In her querulous moods she was continually harping upon the happiness of the old life he had prevailed upon her to relinquish. Sometimes she would declare illogically her fixed intention to return to it. Pastel had one relief in his wretched life, his little brown babe. It lived through all. How he loved the black-eyed gipsy; perhaps it was his love that kept it alive. He watched it and cherished it, always having it near him, taking but little account of his wife's outgoings and incomings. Had his wife carried out her threat, abandoning her home never to return to it, with the child left to him he would have settled with more than stoical content. Perhaps he would have breathed freer, perhaps have rejoiced in his freedom. But no such thought or contingency occurred to him. Her distempered declarations he only regarded as the vapouring and raving of a besotted woman, uncontained and unreasonable. Her age would be against her, her nerve would be gone. He allowed her assertion to pass; absorbed in his work, poor Pastel did not perceive the signs of impending trouble.

(To be continued.)

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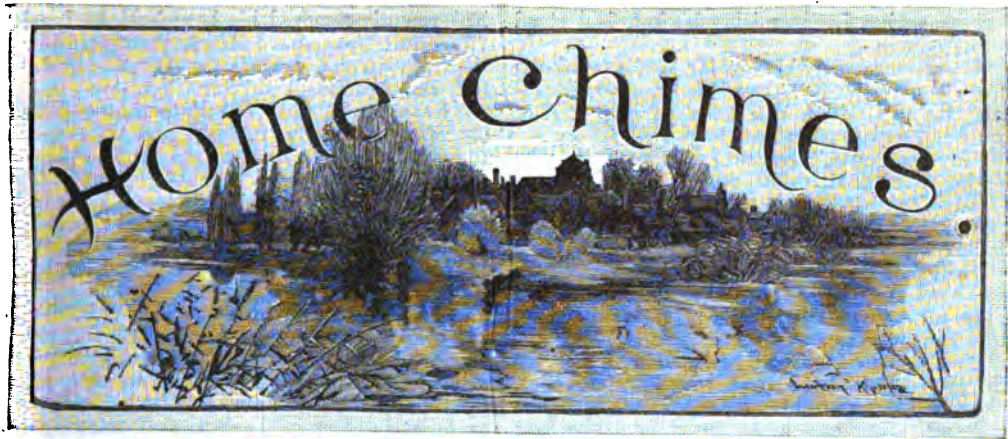


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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 10.]

LONDON: MARCH 7, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

AT FIRST SIGHT.

BY HENRY MARDEN.

I.

ON BOARD A STEAMER.

THE dispute was waxing loud. It was an affair of nations. Germany asserted and England denied; France, Belgium, and America looked on, preserving an armed neutrality. Germany was represented by a flushed and irate little waiter and the champion of Great Britain was a square-shouldered young tourist who wore spectacles. The war of words was carried on under conditions of not a little difficulty, for the tourist knew no German, and only sundry phrases of very Britannie French. The scene was the deck of a pleasure steamer, moving swiftly along the wide and winding Rhine, and the discussion, which so greatly interested the onlookers of various nations, related to a harmless vegetable.

The little waiter with superabundant gesture, vowed that the gentleman had partaken of beans for dinner, whilst England's representative declared with indignation that beans had not been served to him, and for beans he would not pay. The waiter said he must and should pay. The tourists, rather tired perhaps of gazing at the vine-clad hills, gathered closer round the disputants. One gentleman of the genus snob suggested that the waiter's head should be punched. "Ah well!" cried the little man, who heard and understood, "they might do those things in England or America, but not in Germany. No, not in Germany!" A sturdy person muttered that he should like to have the waiter in his back garden for five minutes. Thus encouraged, the young Englishman, who was now pale with wrath and excitement, again declared he would not be swindled; nothing should induce

him to pay for beans. *Nous payons à la carte*, he exclaimed, and appreciating the phrase, repeated it several times. The threat of detaining his luggage added fuel to the fire, and it is impossible to say how this undignified dispute might have ended, had not another tourist, an Englishman, who only now appeared on the scene, come to the aid of his compatriot. Elbowing his way through the throng, he addressed the waiter in his own language, and having mollified him a little, suggested to his fellow countryman that the question in dispute should be referred to the *chef*. This proposal was adopted, and the opposing forces, descended to the cabin accompanied by the new comer.

The little crowd melted away, the excitement was over, and once more the sightseers betook themselves to their guide-books and the scenery. There was one amongst them, a dark-eyed English girl, who could not do this so readily, for the indignant young tourist was her brother, and with pale cheeks, standing on the edge of the crowd, she had heard the unseemly wrangle. "Why would Mark be so quarrelsome? No doubt he was right, indeed she knew he was, but he should have paid anything in order to avoid such a scene." Marjory Harwood looked quite faint as she sat down on a deck stool and waited her brother's return.

Presently he appeared talking eagerly with the man who had come to his rescue.

"It's all settled. I carried my point, the *chef*, who seemed a decent sort of fellow, accepted my statement. You can bear me out, Marjory, that we did not have a single bean. Of course, the fellow made a blunder, and charged me instead of somebody else. Still if Mr.—Mr.—"

"Leslie," interposed the other tourist quietly.

"I beg your pardon, yes; if Mr. Leslie had not turned up, and talked to them in their own lingo, there might have been a lot more bother. I am afraid," turning to the other, "the whole thing has frightened my sister," he said, noticing her pale cheeks, into which, nevertheless, a little colour

had come when Leslie, raising his hat, had stood before her.

"It was extremely kind of Mr. Leslie to take so much trouble, but oh! the whole thing was dreadful," the girl added with a little shiver. "How could you make such a fuss, Mark?"

"My dear girl," returned her brother, who having come off victorious, seemed a little inclined to strut. "One is obliged to stand up for one's rights; it would have been sheer cowardice to pay under such circumstances."

Leslie looked on with an amused smile. "All's well that ends well," he said; "but if you will allow me, I would suggest that for your sister's sake you drop the subject."

Mark Harwood looked a little snubbed, but the girl glanced up at the speaker with grateful eyes. She met his downward gaze, not for the first time that day. Now and again throughout the long morning, upon the river, she had found those honest grey eyes looking in her direction, not offensively, but with a steady, admiring, and almost inquiring gaze. He was not a handsome man by any means, simply a well-made Englishman of perhaps three and thirty, slightly above the average height, wearing a short brown beard, and dressed in rather quieter style than some of the tourist gentlemen who thronged the deck.

"I will read my legends of the Rhine," said Marjory Harwood, "that will give me something else to think about."

"I will pick you out some of the best, if I may," said Leslie; "you have read about Bishop Hatto and the Mouse Tower, of course, and about Roland the Brave; then there's the story of the Lorelie, do you know that?"

"Oh yes," replied Marjory, turning the pages of her book.

Leslie mentioned some others. The subject seemed to interest both of them, but Mark Harwood did not greatly care for it. Presently he strolled away to the fore-deck to sooth his irritated nerves by smoking a pipe. Perhaps but for the sense of irritation and excitement, which still possessed him, he would have thought twice before leaving his sister in conversation with a stranger. Indeed the propriety of the thing did present itself to his mind, in a questioning form.

"Bah! the man is a gentleman, and has done me a good turn. I can't tell him to go about his business, immediately;" he reflected. "Besides, Marjory is a sensible girl and knows how to take care of herself."

Marjory and their new acquaintance sat side by side and discussed the legends of the Rhine, and many other topics without embarrassment. It seemed so easy to talk to this pleasant-voiced stranger, and he took an interest in so many things that Mark would probably have pooh-pooed as romantic and uninteresting.

The stranger's manner was so deferential; he was so manifestly a gentleman, that the girl's first shyness soon disappeared. He had lived in Germany for some time, and could tell her much that she liked to hear. By degrees little bits of personal information came out. Some remark about the speed of the vessel led up to the explanation that Leslie was an engineer; another observation about the health resorts in Germany brought out the remark that Miss Harwood's father was a doctor; who had formerly practised in the country, but

had recently removed his household to London. "London!" exclaimed Mark, strolling back at the moment. "London is the only place fit to live in. Don't you think so?"

"I can hardly bind myself to that opinion;" answered Leslie; "although I have lived close to the great city for several years. A good place for some things, not for all."

"Ah, well, it suits me," declared Mark in his strident tones, as if he had tried all cities; then he marched off again.

The steamer sped upon its way, and the bright September day drew towards its close. The shadows crept along the hills, and silence fell upon the two, who were sitting side by side. Now and then Leslie stole a glance at the clear-cut face beside him. It was even sweeter in this fading light, he thought, than when first he had seen it as he stepped upon the deck that morning. It seemed to him to be the face he had been looking for through the years of his manhood; was she to pass from his sight, joining the mournful host of those whom one sees and speaks with one day, to part from, forever, on the next? Mark's voice broke in upon his soliloquy. He had some question to ask about his passport, and handed it over to Leslie for inspection.

"We, Granville, George, Earl Granville, Viscount Granville, Baron Levison, a Peer of the United Kingdom, &c., &c., request and require in the name of Her Majesty, all those whom it may concern, to allow Mr. Mark Harwood (British subject), of No. 975, Guildford Street, Russell Square, in the county of Middlesex, accompanied by his sister, travelling on the continent, to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford him every assistance and protection of which he may stand in need. Given at the Foreign Office, London, the 5th day of September, 1871.

The Fates were propitious, the passport with the information it contained came as if in answer to Leslie's mental inquiry, and he could hardly help smiling, as he gave Harwood the particulars he wanted.

An hour later they reached their destination. There was a good deal of scrambling and confusion at the landing-place, and young Harwood and his sister were separated from their new acquaintance.

"What has become of him?" said Mark suddenly, as the hotel omnibus jolted onwards in the darkness.

Marjory answered nothing, though she heard the inquiry. She was tired and yet content, leaning back with her eyes half closed. She felt sure, somehow, that to-morrow she should meet the gaze of those grey eyes again, and, for the time, it was enough to think of the events of the day: a long day, a day marred to some extent, by that undignified scene about the beans; but yet a day to which, as she was well assured, her thoughts would often turn back again.

Leslie had told them of the best hotel, but he had chosen other and familiar quarters for himself. He knew Wiesbaden well, and he felt confident that on the morrow, he could, without intrusion, find an opportunity of being useful to his new friends. In the meantime he went to bed, or rather to his room; there by the window he sat smoking far into the night. The day had, after all, been a common-place sort of day, but yet, as

an honest man, he did not deceive himself or seek to do so. With a sort of dreamy satisfaction he realized that it had brought him face to face with a new experience. A sense of romance and tenderness was fluttering at his heart, and all because Marjory Harwood had sat beside him on the deck and drooped her silken lashes when he turned to her. Was she like the cruel water-nymph who was said to have lured men to their destruction on the rock above St. Goarshausen; or simply a gentle English maiden destined as wife and mother to make the central figure in some English home? Leslie felt no doubt upon the question. He would have pledged his life that the girl was honest and true.

In four days he must be back again in England, back amid the whirr of machinery and clang of hammers. Should he take with him merely the memory of a pleasant day with a sweet-faced girl upon the Rhine, or the hope of something more? The thought brought deepened lines upon a forehead that had already lost its smoothness.

"£250 a year," he muttered; "what right has a man with £250 a year to dream or be romantic?"

II.

UNDER THE LINDENS.

MARK HARWOOD and his sister lingered at Wiesbaden a day or two longer than they had intended. There were life and movement in the place, and perhaps an exceptional interest by reason of the presence of not a few wounded officers who had fought in the Franco-Prussian war. These interesting warriors reclined in bath-chairs in the Kursaal gardens, when the bands played and occasionally tried their luck at the tables. Mark Harwood tried his luck too, for he was determined to "do" the place thoroughly, but did not meet with much success. "Never mind, I shall have another try," said he; "make up my mind what I am willing to lose and stop when I get to the limit."

Leslie, himself, looking on, felt half inclined to plunge, not for the sake of the excitement, but in the hope of realizing a fortune by some tremendous run of luck. He smiled at the notion the next moment. It was evening, and he glanced round upon the white, intent faces of the players, men and women, who sat pricking their cards, and watching the relentless rake of the croupier. Bah! it was an unwholesome thing this.

"Shall I take your sister outside? it is hot in here," he said to Mark, with whom he was now on almost familiar terms.

"All right, I will follow in a few minutes," was the answer; so the two, leaving the young Englishman peering eagerly through his spectacles, went out and passed beyond the monotonous sound of the croupiers' voices.

Beneath the linden trees, which rustled in the cool night breeze, they sat down and were silent for awhile.

"I hope you have liked your trip so far," said Leslie, breaking the silence presently.

"Yes, I have liked it very much," she answered, simply.

"But there is no place like home, that is what your tone seems to imply."

"It implied it unconsciously then, though I

daresay by the time we have carried out all we have planned, we shall be glad to be home once more. But we have not lived long in London, and it hardly seems like home to me."

"You prefer the hills and dales?"

"Infinitely; but it is best to be contented."

"Yes, indeed, if one only can; but there are times when the 'stalled ox' and all that it implies seems more to be desired than the dinner of herbs. Yet it is no use sighing for the moon."

"How allegorically you are talking."

He felt that the impeachment was not without reason, but he sat there silent again for a few seconds, scraping the gravel with his cane.

"Miss Harwood," he exclaimed suddenly "do you think your father would consider it impertinent if I were to call at your house if—if—I happen to be that way? I should like to hear from you and your brother how you got through the rest of your tour, after you are back again."

The girl's answer did not come very readily.

"You think me presumptuous," he continued, "and perhaps I am; but still, when one is very much in earnest, the informality of an introduction is forgotten; besides, I think I could find vouchers for my respectability, if for nothing else."

"I don't think my father would ask you to bring a written character," said Marjory, lightly. "And I hope Mark is sufficiently grateful to welcome one who helped him in time of need."

"It would be very kind of him," he replied, a little drily, "but I should hope to see you as well as your brother—is it within the bounds of possibility?"

"Quite, I think."

"At all events, I will make the attempt. I am not amongst those, who neither toil nor spin, so I fear I may not be able to call at a fashionable time, but I will take my chance. Now will you forgive me—I humbly sue for pardon in advance—I want to ask a question. Promise me to answer it, only one question—will you?"

It was well that they were sitting away from the lights, or he would have seen the tell-tale blood rush over the girl's cheek and forehead.

"That is not fair," she said.

"Perhaps not, shall I ask your brother instead?"

"Pray don't," was the swift reply.

"Then I will ask yourself. Will you tell me, if you are engaged to be married?" She sat beside him plucking slowly the petals of a flower with her delicate fingers. Then after a pause, in which he was seized with a mad desire to take one of those shapely, white hands, and cover it with kisses, she rose.

"I think we will go and look for Mark now," she said, brushing the petals to the ground.

"I have offended you," he exclaimed regretfully, "I know it must seem a monstrous question from a man, whom four days ago you had neither seen nor heard of. I ought not to expect you to answer me, yet I believe you would if the answer had to be yes. I am content with your silence. Don't think I am going to pester you by asking anything else, except that you will let me see you—as I hope to do—again."

A sturdy figure approached them in the shadow of the trees. "Here is Mark," said Marjory, as if with a sigh of relief, then she swiftly turned to her companion and added timidly and yet with firmness, "I am not offended, Mr. Leslie."

III.

IN GUILDFORD STREET.

A GLORIOUS September day, blue sky and big, billowy, white clouds, genial sunshine and a fresh air—a day to gladden the heart of man, and make him oblivious of the winter of his discontent, and yet a day which failed to cheer Herbert Leslie, as he sat idly in the gardens of Wiesbaden.

The village seems asleep, and dead now,
Lubin is away,

But in this case, it was the absence of Marjory which made the difference; none indeed, to the band and promenaders, none to the white-faced frequenters of the tables, none to the weary-voiced croupiers, but all the difference in the world to Herbert Leslie.

The words spoken beneath the linden trees were almost the last they had exchanged. To-day Mark's presence had provided an effectual barrier to tenderness, there had been just a pressure of the hand, just a glance into the eyes, and then—parting. Up to the last, Leslie had thought that Mark Harwood would give him some pressing invitation to visit them in London, but Mark, either forgetful or preoccupied with payment of hotel bills, and arrangements as to luggage, had done nothing of the sort. So they had gone their way, like John Gilpin, "on pleasure bent," and he must go his—back to the work-a-day world, back to the narrow stipend and the somewhat dingy lodging, which represented "home." "The sooner the better," thought Leslie, as he knocked the ashes from his cigar, for now life in that German watering-place seemed to him altogether flat, stale and unprofitable. He was angry and ashamed, angry at the difficulties which stood in his path, and ashamed of his unaccustomed impetuosity. What girl would be allowed to leave a comfortable and perhaps luxurious home, to share genteel poverty with a man whose income was represented by two hundred and fifty pounds a year? And what right had such a man, after a few days acquaintance, and in the absence of the girl's natural guardian to half declare himself her lover? Thus Leslie lashed himself unmercifully, but in due time there was a certain amount of reaction.

Why should he despair? He was a gentleman, although a poor one; the only difficulty was money; well, perhaps something might be done, but at all events nothing could be accomplished here in Wiesbaden. Yes! the sooner he was home again the better, and so he went.

Sunday came round, the only day on which he was at leisure, and in the afternoon he went by rail to London; it was but a short journey from the place upon the Thames at which his "firm" had their works.

He found himself crossing the Strand (how odious it looked with its shuttered windows and Sunday-dressed passengers), and thence through Clement's Inn, and that devious passage leading into Carey Street, to Chancery Lane. Then he crossed Holborn, and passed up Warwick Court, and on by Raymond's Buildings, until he reached Guildford Street. He had not far to search. There, near the Foundling Hospital, was a substantial-looking dwelling, on the door of which was a brass plate, inscribed with the name of Dr.

Harwood. Should he pull one of those three bells labelled "Visitors," "Surgery," and "Night," and ask if Dr. Harwood was at home, if not, what had he come here for? To gaze at the commonplace shrine of his divinity, and then go back again? Evidently that and nothing more, for presently he went slowly back by the way he had come. It was not a lively walk, and the people, the Sunday passers-by, and the haggard, dull-faced loiterers at the street corners, did not seem the best specimens of humanity. Yes! Marjory was right; London, or at least this part of London, was not the place for her. How proud and glad he would be if he could take her to some great and splendid home, amid Nature's best surroundings, and say to her, "All of this is mine and thine!"

Another week passed, another Sunday came, and he found himself going over the same ground again. This time he resolved that his journey should not be absolutely objectless. Yet, if conscience makes cowards of us, surely love does the same, for he found himself passing that brass-plated door with a palpitating heart. Then he pulled himself together, and without allowing time to reflect, gave a vigorous knock and ring. Up to that time he had not decided what he was going to say or do, and the door was opened so promptly that he was disconcerted.

"Is—is—Mr. Mark at home?" he asked hesitatingly.

"No, sir," said the servant. "He's not expected for another week. Will you leave a message?"

"No, no; it is of no consequence," said Leslie, and, feeling himself disgracefully like Mr. Toots, he turned away.

He went back dismally through the twilight, for the autumn days were drawing in, and the leaves fell fast in Gray's Inn gardens; his hopes seemed in keeping with the gathering gloom and the thinning foliage. When he left Wiesbaden it had seemed as if he would find some key to the enigma of his fate as soon as he had reached home again, but now that he was back, and had been back for quite a fortnight, the solution of his difficulties was not even within a measurable distance of discovery. He had reason to believe that the firm appreciated his services, and probably if he applied for an increase of salary he would get it, but how would an additional twenty or thirty pounds a year improve his position, or give anything like stability to his prospects? No! without capital and without influential friends, he must remain without a wife.

Thus had a complacent and practical young man become as great a dreamer as Hermann in the Rhine legend, which he and Marjory had read together on the steamer, as great a raver as the hero of Lockesley Hall. Yet all the while there were good things brewing for him. Over the sea there was his rare and radiant maiden, taking little heed of mountain passes and other continental wonders, and irritating her brother by the pensive preoccupation of her manner, and (which was more practically beneficial to Leslie), at home the members of his firm were putting their heads together. One of the heads was getting old and grey. This was the head of the senior partner, who wanted to gradually retire into private life. He could afford to forego some portion of his share in the profits,

and it was decided to take in new "blood" in the person of a junior working partner. One morning Leslie was summoned into the chief's office.

"Mr. Leslie," said the great man, "the arrangements of the firm are going to be readjusted. I don't propose to take quite so active a part as I have done. I am not so young as I was, and we have been thinking—er—in fact, that as you have been with us for some years, and—er—shown considerable aptitude, that we might admit you to a small share in the concern."

"But—but," stammered Leslie, "I have no capital."

He was ashamed of his excitement. A week ago, however gratifying the announcement, he would have received it calmly.

"That we have considered," said the head of the firm, waving his hand in the direction of another partner, who stood upon the hearth-rug. "Capital is of course essential in our business, but there are other things to be considered, and, in fact, in your case we should be satisfied to deduct such annual instalments to make up the purchase money of your share, as will leave you a clear income of about seven hundred a year. Possibly you would find that enough to marry on if you were so disposed, and as there is a prospect of more Government work, it is not unlikely that your income may be a little larger."

Then he went into details, but through all the details Leslie was as one that dreams. He seemed in a dream, until he found himself on the following day—Sunday again—treading the now familiar route to Guildford Street. A chill wind was blowing and overhead there was a leaden darkening sky; in the Gray's Inn gardens the leaves lay thicker than ever. Winter was near at hand, but the thought—if he thought of it at all—brought no depression to Leslie, as with swinging step he went upon his way. The church bells were ringing for afternoon service when he reached Guildford Street, and made direct for the door with the brass-plate. Then, suddenly, he was face to face with Marjory Harwood.

"Well met," he cried, for by the way of contrast it seemed to him now that the stars in their courses were fighting for him.

The girl, bewildered at his manner, looked shyly in his face.

"You were going to church?" he continued; "let me walk with you. Don't treat me as a stranger."

"I will turn back with you to the house if you were going there to see us," she said with a little effort at formality.

"Not just yet, let us walk a little way," he answered.

His tone seemed both masterful and eager, but whatever it was, she obeyed. The church-bells ceased and they were still walking, they had paced the length of Guildford Street and right through Russell Square. Amid those unromantic surroundings Leslie said what he had to say. It was the old, old story, worn threadbare and yet never quite worn out—and Marjory listened to it as to a new revelation, and so it was to her—vague fancies and girlish imaginings had taken shape at last. Here was the good and gracious time which comes to happy lovers.

The lamps had already been lighted when they stood in front of the house again.

"But," she said, half laughing and half tearful, looking up at him; "it seems so strange, I have hardly known you any time, and it was really——"

"Yes," he answered, as she hesitated; "it was really and truly love at first sight."

* * * * *

It was in the autumn of 1871 that Leslie came to Mark Harwood's assistance in the matter of the beans, and in the same year Marjory became Mrs. Leslie. They have had their ups and downs. Some people would say, it has been, and bids fair, to be a common-place married life, with a common-place little family. Perhaps so; but neither of them has ever repented that meeting on the Rhine steamer, and, after all, for Darby and Joan, what better fortune can the world hold than, as the song says, to "have lived and loved together."

PASTEL:

A STUDY IN MONOCHROME.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON.

Author of "Meadow Sweet," &c.

CHAPTER V.

AN APPARITION.

HE scarcely knew when she left the house, he missed the child. He reproached himself for his lack of attention. The mother had shown a disposition at other times of taking the child out with her, a practice he stealthily prevented as much as it was possible. She was not to be trusted with the care of it. He was always uneasy when the child was away from him. It was in November when darkness creeps on early. How lonely he felt without the accustomed prattle. It was always a relief to him to look off from his canvas for a moment to regard the child innocently occupied amusing itself. The afternoon passed slowly enough, the light waned, and he threw down his brushes anxiously and sat down in the gloom. Would his wife be late?—the child ought not to run the risk of the night air. He rose and paced the room, he dare not go out, lest the absent ones should return, and his wife taking advantage of his absence, sally out again. He was only troubled about the child. More and more anxious he became as the night crept on apace. Ah, it should never occur again. He sat up the night, waiting, waiting. There had been occasions when his wife had been brought home in a cab by some Samaritan who knew poor Pastel's trouble. He had hope, morning would come and bring the truants back he thought, or tried to think.

Morning came to dash his hopes to the ground. He realized that it was useless sitting waiting, waiting. He reproached himself that he had not commenced a search the night previous. He could not work, he must occupy the day, he would begin by scouring the neighbourhood. He made a round of the police courts, he reported the matter at each, perhaps not too circumstantially. On following days he traversed London, ferreting in quarters likely and unlikely, but without any success r

warding his diligence. He did not gain the slightest clue of the missing wife and child. He read the agony column of the dailies; at last he inserted an advertisement in several of them, appending his name, so that if any of them fell into his wife's hand there might be no mistake that the appeal emanated from him. To his surprise he had a prompt answer. He received a note from his wife that did not come through the post. In it she declared her determination never to return to him, also her resolve to retain possession of the child at all hazards. This did not give any comfort to our poor friend, nor did it have the effect his wife desired it to have. Pastel redoubled his efforts in the search. He was prodigal in his expenditure, advertising and instituting enquiries. It was the child he wished to recover, the mother might have her way. Pastel was one of those finely organised beings whose brain was but too tensely strung. His demeanour was quiet, but there was always a strange far away look in his eyes, a quivering disposition about lip and chin. Sometimes a tear might be seen glistening on his eyelid. He answered more absently, his replies often led one to fear that his reason was indeed going. He wore to a shadow; he became subject to the most extraordinary delusions. His last and most persistent one, that he would find his wife—a miserable suicide. Such became his deep-rooted conviction. He would meet with her when twelve jurymen were assembled to express their opinion as to the cause of her death. He declared that he knew the temperament of his wife only too well. She would not hesitate when driven to extremity. He was confident that she would not yield to return to him. And his child?—his heart would rise into his throat at the contemplation of his child's lot. Would his wife penitently compass its return, or malignantly do her utmost to prevent that? Pastel's face became familiar at those most dismal gatherings. An artist, he was sometimes recognised and treated with some consideration, yet in time coroners began to fancy it but a morbid craze on our poor friend's part. But Pastel's release from his self-enforced pilgrimages was to come. Ghost of his former self, due to privation, for not only did his mania make grievous inroads on his time, and time was money to him, but his unsettled mind deranged his stomach, the little food he ate nourished him but little. Three parts of the indigestion in the world is due to an anxious mind. One evening Pastel was returning from an appointment; to reach his rooms more quickly he decided to avail himself of the Underground Railway. He had not been seated in the compartment many moments when he felt himself strangely moved. In the far-away corner sat a figure that reminded him forcibly of his lost wife. It became conviction with him that it was she, and conviction gained in strength when he believed himself recognised in turn. She screened her face with a shawl covered hand—how thin and worn and old the shawl was—she evidently courted obscurity. He watched her so intently he became conscious that his conduct was attracting the notice of his fellow passengers. He knew their eyes were upon him, regarding him curiously. But he could not control himself. Rising erect, and with a voice that thrilled everyone about him, he called his lost wife by name:

"Ellen!"

The woman started, rose up, and removed her hand from her mouth. Pastel could no longer doubt. It was his wife. His eyes became momentarily dim; he felt giddy; his voice failed him, but he clasped his hands supplicatingly. The next moment she had vanished. He did not see the door of the carriage open, but she passed through it.

With a cry of horror, he sprang forward frantically, and was instantly grasped by several pairs of hands, and forced back into his seat. For a moment the impression held that the carriage contained a madman.

Pastel raved incoherently for some moments about his wife, then sank back exhausted.

"Mad? No!" exclaimed one, contemptuous at the suggestion, and having some sympathy, perhaps from at times being a sufferer. "Poor devil, he has had 'em, or is going to have 'em!"

"What?"

"The blues"—in disgust at such ignorance—"d. t., you know. Hang it, have you never heard of such a thing?"

"Tut, tut! How a fellow can be such a fool!"

All judged the paroxysm over, for Pastel resumed his seat, and calmly stated his intention of alighting at the next station. The train began to slacken, others had to alight; he was watched for a moment. Their strange passenger was still a victim to his hallucination. He was demanding an interview with a responsible official.

"He will be locked up, and properly, too," commented a puritanical person. "He quite gave me a fright."

Each one expressed impatience, or amusement, or pity, but all had one thought. Finally, all hurried off; it was no business of theirs. The man was not himself; for the time being he needed restraint. No doubt he would be seen to by some one.

Pastel was less mad than his fellow-travellers supposed him to be. He had had time to collect his wits. It was not with heroics that he met the prompt inspector. He simply inquired if it was possible for any one to pass through a carriage door when the train was in motion, and stated that he had had an impression of a woman passing through in such a manner. Pastel was a child in some things; he detected no covert incredulity in the eyes of the man he was addressing, but there was something offhand in the man's reply that almost disconcerted Pastel.

"Sir, nothing is impossible, but the thing is most unlikely."

Pastel tendered his card, and departed, certain that if he had not seen his wife, he had seen her wraith.

The following morning Pastel's condition was terrible. A policeman brought him the intelligence that the body of a woman, much mutilated, had been found upon the railway. How it had got there was a mystery; whether it had been forced through the slide of the door was an open question. No, it had been nearly a station in advance where the body had been recovered, but it might have been carried on by a train. The body had not been identified. The gentleman had left his card with the inspector.

Pastel had the impression that the lynx-eyed constable was regarding him critically. Was he suspected of foul play? That could be disproved readily. But how? His fellow-passengers he had no knowledge of, no clue to any one, unless they came forward voluntarily. It was to Pastel's surprise, and certainly to his relief, that he recognized in a reporter one of his fellow-travellers on the preceding evening. He was as promptly remembered.

"Indeed I thought you were mad!" exclaimed the reporter candidly; "for I saw no one."

But room was made for Pastel to go forward.

"It is my wife!" cried Pastel, identifying the woman.

"I think yet he is a little touched," murmured the liner aside to the policeman. "He has barely looked at her, and seen her condition. There was no woman in the carriage I could swear, and who ever heard of a ghost in a railway train?"

Pastel's story concerning his lost wife and child was not to be discredited, but the tale of her appearance in the railway carriage was met with lowered eyebrows. Pastel was firm in his belief that if no woman was there, it was his wife's apparition.

The coroner was a medical man. In his opinion the poor fellow was the victim of an hallucination; the pent-up agony of years had culminated in a frame of mind leaving him an easy prey to delusions. The man's stomach had something to do with his state. Neglect of it, worry, and disquiet, had prevented him from taking proper and sustaining nourishment. What food the poor fellow did get did him no good, to judge by his looks. The verdict was of necessity an open one, and the coroner in his mind thought that, now an incubus was removed off the poor fellow's mind, he would thrive better, and come to regard such delusions as ghost-seeing more sceptically. The coroner was near upon the truth. Pastel, though much shaken, as might be expected, began to breathe freer. His only hope and desire now was the recovery of his child, if living. How he would have welcomed the slightest clue of her! But the years rolled on, and no sign came to give him courage, and his faith that she would be restored to him waxed fainter and fainter. Death had taken the child, as it had taken the others.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

We live through great sorrows and take heart again. Pastel found solace, if not forgetfulness, in his art. He toiled on with revived faith in eventual and wide recognitions. He painted some good pictures. He found patrons, or rather they found him, which was much better, and they paid him for his canvasses not illiberally. He did not obtain fabulous prices, but he was content. He was anything but a sordid man. He cared only for means to pay his way, to keep his head above water, and gratify his few tastes. He was offered a liberal salary to go out to one of the colonies, but he declined the offer. He could not think of leaving London, thus to sever himself from all that

the art soul holds dear. The artist, be he ever such a recluse, has his *alter ego* who will drop in and retail the chit-chat of the studios and the gossip of the town. But a stronger with bound him—something might crop up during his absence. If away, if he entrusted a charge to any one, they would take little interest in it after the first warmth of promise. No, he was settled in London for the remainder of his life. It was suggested that he should commence an art class, drawing from the life; he adopted the suggestion and obtained a number of pupils. Indirectly, through his class, he was engaged as drawing-master at an academy of high repute in the suburbs.

Pastel was never so flourishing in his life; he mixed more with people, his engagements brought him out. He fell in with Janet, a lonely being like himself, and Pastel was weary of his solitary life. Whether he or Janet made the first advance is immaterial. Pastel was not given to excessive verbal fervour, though he was candescent as tow. His courtship was a short one. He was a man never long in making up his mind. No doubt he believed that Janet was endowed with the qualities deficient in his first love. She was not one in whom burnt a fierce flame. A quiet self-contained person with a deep fund of cheerful common sense, one to look well to the ways of her household. He had had bitter experience of fever heat and wilfulness.

Pastel recovered yet more his vigour and spirit. A young family began to spring up about him, his past began to assume the proportions of a feverish dream; the memory of it certainly not in any degree obliterated, though its features were softened and partially obscured. He rarely alluded to his early life; he had acquainted Janet that he had had previous marital experience but of an unhappy nature; he withheld from her the worst phases of it. Perhaps it would have been better had he been less reticent, but he had more than a distaste for telling the story; he looked back upon the miseral ordeal as upon a horrible nightmare. Janet had exhibited a natural desire to fathom the mystery as we have shown, meeting with a repulse. She had not resented his reticence. Her common sense provided her with a logic that was irrefutable. What was the dead past to her; her present position was not to be questioned or assaulted!

Pastel was rash in giving up those engagements which were as certain as they were profitable. But he was tempted; a brilliant offer was made him, and wearying of what had become to him an abominable servitude, because of its mill-round, he closed without looking too closely into the offer. We have shown how the rocket came down a stick.

I had returned from a certain memorable progress, which has been duly chronicled in the *Ear-wigger*, when my restful reveries were broken in upon by the delivery of a sealed note.

"Another despatch," thought I; "the exciting and momentous struggle is to be carried on in another part of the enemy's country. *Vive le bruit!*"

But at first glance I recognized the scrip on the envelope, so characteristic of the man. The writing was as large as round hand; I did not know another hand anything like it. It was from Pastel. A note from him was an event; I am

not aware that I had received previously more than one epistolary communication from him. Pastel chose to send his messages by word of mouth. He hated taking up a pen; he had eccentric ideas of and concerning the inditing of letters. He had startling theories anent orthography. He knew little of those phonetic madmen who would revolutionize our class books, but he believed that words should be spelt exactly as they are pronounced. It was not that his education was of the scantiest that he advocated such principles; he was quite conscientious advancing his arguments. However, he did not carry out his theories to the letter; it was only in small words that he was determined. To cite an example or two, *much* always carried a "t," and *very* an additional "r."

The superscription covered the envelope, and was written, I could see, in nervous haste. What was wrong? What was exciting Pastel so much? He either had been promptly acquainted of my return to town, or which was more likely he was unacquainted with my past absence. I tore open the envelope. There were only a few lines, beseeching me to go to him at once; an extraordinary thing had happened, and he desired my counsel, support and assistance. It was worded so plaintively and yet so desperately, I felt that I could not neglect his summons. I would set out without delay, taking the precaution of affixing on my door my usual intimation should any one official come up while I was away.

"When I reached Pastel's I found him a victim to great but restrained nervous excitement. He wrung my hand speechlessly. The control he was exerting over himself before his wife, I could see was only causing him greater suffering. He must not continue thus, I thought, or the consequences must be disastrous. I was deeply touched without knowing his trouble; one is sympathetic when one sees a gentle nature smarting under poignant anguish. I felt feverishly anxious to alleviate or subdue his delirium.

"My dear fellow," I began, "I received your note, and came down at once. What is wrong?" I was stopped by a movement of his hand that signified "Hush!"

I looked from him to Janet, who was present, and comprehended that he was averse to speaking before her of the trouble that had leaped up before him. I waited a moment or two at a loss. Then it struck me that Pastel would speak freely away from his wife. I was spared the task of putting so much in words by Pastel rising and asking for his hat and coat.

"Janet, I shall not be away long," he said, sadly but propitiatingly. "I want Lawless's advice on a matter that has perplexed me."

Pastel strode to the door. Before I could come up with him I was detained by his wife. She caught me by the wrist and held on tenaciously. I could see that she was stirred out of her usual phlegm. She was nervous, and anxious too.

"Mr. Lawless," she said, tremulously, "you will not leave him? I do not know what has occurred, but he has been odd—so absent, so troubled, since yesterday. A message came for him, and he went out. He was away some hours; he has not been the same man since his return."

I assured her that I would look after him, and gave her greater courage in expressing an opinion

that whatever the spectre was, I should be able to lay it. As it happened, it was an extraordinary metonym.

"No doubt it is something not half so serious as Pastel imagines it to be," I murmured. "I cannot conceive what can come to ruffle him in his placid way of life. He lives like a recluse."

I knew that Pastel had a tendency to become hypochondriacal if any sign of reverse loomed on the horizon—his sedentary life no doubt the cause.

"Come along, Lawless!" I heard him shout, querulously.

When I reached him he said—

"She has been asking you if you have an idea what is troubling me?—you need not trouble to deny it. In spite of all my attempts to be collected and careless before her, I can see that she suspects—how can I ever tell her?"

By this we were in the street; and Pastel had grasped my arm with his hand almost too tightly. I could feel his fingers in my yielding flesh.

"Shall we go in anywhere?" I suggested.

"Where can we go?" questioned he. "No, I have felt suffocated between four walls. If it had not been for alarming Janet I should have taken a breather for the day. No, let us keep in the open; there are few people in this bye street, we can walk up and down; I have not much to tell you."

He paused for a few moments in tragic silence, then he said, almost with a gasp—

"Lawless, my wife is alive!"

"Yes, yes," I answered vacantly.

Janet was in the flesh, I had had convincing evidence. My wrist would yet show a blanched ring round it. Really Janet had cause for anxiety, her husband's reason was giving way! Was it softening of the brain? Strange it was that I, with all my knowledge of Pastel's past, should be so dense.

"You forget," he went on, with stern, reproachful gravity—"Janet—is she my wife? Lawless, I mean the woman I married years ago—she who deserted me, carrying away with her the child,"

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, waking up to solemnity of the situation. "Pastel, it cannot be."

"I tell you she is alive, for I have seen her."

(To be continued.)

WEST COUNTRY LEGENDS.

BY ALICE KING.

THE stories which circulate through our cities, or in a thickly inhabited neighbourhood even in the country, or find their way into newspaper columns, have always in these days, be they never so strange and startling, a touch of the realistic and prosaic about them. If a ghost makes his or her appearance, it is sure to be arrayed in a coat or dress of the most modern cut, and sitting in a railway carriage or a hansom cab; if a young lady elopes, she does it in the coolest, most matter-of-fact manner possible, and never forgets to pack up even her tooth-brush; the very horrors in the penny dreadfuls have something that savours of the commonplace in their sensationalism, and

generally have for their scene of action a scullery full of dirty dishes, and enlivened by the melodious dripping of a pump, or a market-garden peopled with cabbages and gooseberry bushes.

The case is, however, very different in the region round about Exmoor, whither we want once more to conduct our readers. There fairies still linger among the flowers and ferns in the deep lanes, there no respectable ghost would think of showing his nose except arrayed in a winding-sheet; there lovers still keep moon-lit trysts, and escape the vigilance of too busy parents and maiden aunts by stolen rambles through shadowy woodland paths, where there are none save the birds and the squirrels to peep and watch. Here, romance has not yet died out beneath the rule of the convenient or the useful. Here, fancy and poetry have not, as yet, quite fled from the land before the scream of the steam whistle.

In a narrow valley among the hills round about Exmoor there stands a quaintly built old house, some hundred years ago the home of one of the most ancient and respectable yeoman families of the district, where ghosts are well-known by every one within ten miles of it to frequent in the most orthodox manner possible. They rustle up and down the passages in robes of such stiff brocade and whalebone that it is utterly useless for any one to try to get repose in their beds between midnight and dawn; they tramp about the attics in high-heeled shoes, and refuse to depart, though there is a book-case hard by filled with the most racy French novels and the rarest blossoms of German scepticism; they dance in the large kitchen till the stone floor rings again, and the whole house is filled with wierd, mysterious harmony, that seems to come from a fiddle playing, no one knows where, the merriest strains, yet strains that, with all their airy mirth, were never played by any barrel-organ of to-day.

Not very far from this same house there is a deep lane, much over-shadowed with trees, where it is twilight towards evening long before the sun has set elsewhere, where it is cool and shady even in the hottest, brightest noon. There, when the moon is at full, and the silver beams are filtering in among the branches over-head, any one who likes to take a walk that way instead of going to bed, may see a very remarkable sight, considering the place and the hour. If he stands still at the top of the lane, which here is about as steep as the staircase of the leaning tower at Pisa, and therefore we should have supposed no especially pleasant ball-room, he will behold a band of lovely ladies, all dressed in white, going through some strange mazy dance figure. They glide in and out under one another's arms, they whirl round in circles, they pause and curtsy majestically, they take hands and sway to and fro, they wave their long, floating, silvery scarves as if in harmony to some unheard melody; they appear, in short, to be having an exceedingly good time of it, and to be very well satisfied with the stony rubble and slippery rocks of the lane by way of a floor, and with the glow-worms twinkling among the feathery ferns, and the moonbeams glinting through the tremulous leaves by way of lamps, and with the murmur of the stream near at hand, and the sighing of the night breeze by way of orchestra. They do not weary it seems; they continue ceaselessly their dance, until the eye that watches them grows

tired, and the brain behind it dizzy with the spectacle of perpetual motion, until the morn laughs drowsily in the east, and the lark wakes up and calls all the birds and insects with his clear note of reveille; then the ladies vanish in an instant, and are not heard of till the full moon shines again. Whether on dark nights this same lively party betakes itself to their kitchen of the old house, and there carries on its cheerful frolics, with the addition, it may be, of a little male society, and this is why there is the sound of heavy feet on the stone floor, whereas the feet which tread those varied measures in the lane make no more noise than falling petals, it is quite impossible to determine.

Between two of the hills which, in August, are so richly mantled with golden gorse and purple heather, there is a depression in the ground, in which a fanciful mind might certainly, working hard to make belief, find a resemblance to a huge arm-chair. The imagination of the west country folk has, however, overcome all difficulties on the subject, for there is a legend that there, long, long ago, some of the grannies say in the reign of King David, others in that of Queen Elizabeth, it was the favourite seat of a giant of most mischievous habits and proclivities. He would stretch out one long arm, put his hand in playfully at the window of the buttery of Dunster Castle, and take thence anything he fancied in the way of a venison pasty or a flagon of sack. He would wash his feet in the stream which runs through the valley, and seize the home-spun linen, hanging in some unlucky village dame's garden to bleach, by way of an impromptu towel to dry them. He would catch up the little Exmoor sheep on the opposite hill-side, and play a lively game at pitch and toss with them, an operation to which we should think being made into mutton must be far preferable. The dancing ladies may be regarded perhaps as no unpleasant neighbours, but decidedly it may be looked upon as a matter of self-congratulation by the west country in general, that this free and easy gentleman has departed into the regions of Exmoor mist and romance.

There was a beautiful legendary custom in the west country with regard to Easter Sunday. Early on Easter morning, long before dawn, the sides of Dunkery, some fifty years ago, were covered with young men who seemed to come from every quarter of the compass, and to be pressing up towards the beacon, as the highest point of the hill is called. The belief was, that any unmarried young man, who could see the sun rise from the top of Dunkery that Easter-day, would be blessed with a run of good luck in his love, in his workshop, or on his farm, for the whole of the rest of the year.

Not far from the Bristol channel, there stands a handsome old church, which has a singular legend connected with its erection. It is said that long ago an ancient hostelry stood where the church now stands, and that one night a funeral party, who were conveying the body of a lady for burial in a family vault, she having died far from home, came here to rest on their journey. On their dear lady's hand there was a ring of great value, which had been given her by her husband in days when they were lovers, and which she had desired might not be removed from her finger even after her death,

This fact was known to her husband's confidential servant, who had been entrusted with the whole of the funeral arrangements—his master not intending to meet the sad procession till it reached the place of interment. The man's dishonest greed was excited by the thought of the diamonds in the ring, and at midnight, when the whole house slept, he stole to the chamber where the body had been deposited, and opened the coffin with some tools he brought with him, hoping at once to get possession of the coveted treasure; but the ring could not be got off the cold, stiff finger, so he used a knife to try to remove it. What was his terror when blood began to flow from the supposed dead hand, and the lady sat up and gazed around her. No record tells what was the ultimate fate of the would-be robber, and unintentional preserver, but legendary lore says that the lady, as a token of thanksgiving for her restoration to her husband and children, built the church on the site of the old hostelry.

West country romance seems to have busied itself especially with the foundation of west country churches. The story goes, that when it was first determined to build a church in the little sea-port of Minehead, the site for the sacred building was fixed on the sea shore. Accordingly materials for commencing the sacred edifice were brought together on the spot chosen; but scarcely had a few cartloads of stone and timber been deposited in the appointed situation, when one morning, the astonished workmen, who had left all the collected materials lying in a very common-place way the evening before, found, on reaching the scene of their labours, that not so much as a chip of wood was to be seen there.

The men stood staring at each other, half inclined to think that the quarts of cider they took so freely last night in the parlour of the "Horse and Crooks" were still in their eyes and heads, when suddenly a dame, who dwelt in a cottage which stood in an elevated position on the hill above, overlooking the sea, appeared, breathless and capless on the scene, relating the extraordinary fact that all the materials for building the church were piled up outside her door. At first the affair was regarded by the authorities of the little town, who all looked very wise and stern about it, as a fiction of the old lady's too fruitful fancy; next, when they reached her cottage door, and saw that she had spoken the simple truth, they believed that their worshipful selves were being sported with by a band of merry west country lads, who filled the streets at night with sounds that were not exactly psalm-tunes. But, heap up huge blocks of stone as they might, and set watchmen to guard the spot as they might, each day every scrap of building material was always found in the morning outside the old woman's door on the hill. Then the worthy burghers of the seaport changed their opinions on the subject. There were powers at work in the matter, they agreed, that it would not do to contradict; so the church was built on the hill and has stood there ever since.

There is a legend, which has a pathetic touch about it, concerning a ruined cottage which stands on the side of Dunkery. Here, says the story, at the time when religious persecution raged fiercely in France, two elderly French Huguenot ladies came to reside. They were gentle, retiring women,

whose former history always remained a mystery to their West country neighbours, but who had always a kindly word for them, spoken in broken English, when they chanced to meet them.

The most incomprehensible, unaccountable thing about them, however, was that no one could tell what they lived on, for only the scantiest portion of bread, and that not enough to keep one woman alive, ever found its way in the shape of any sort of food to the cottage. The ladies' dress evidently showed that they were in straitened circumstances, but then they could not live upon air, albeit it was hill country air. They would never let any one enter their cottage, so there was no clearing up the mystery.

At length there came a time when the ladies appeared no more on the heather or in the lanes. By-and-bye, some of the neighbours went to the cottage and peered in. There, on the single poor, narrow bed lay the two women, clasped in each other's arms, but dead and cold. The house was searched, and nothing could be found but several pots containing slugs, on which the west country folk believed them to have lived in approved French fashion.

Such are some of the legends told by West-country firesides, or in the summer twilight, as we wander across the purple heather.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever," "Juliet's Guardian,"
"Pure Gold," "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER XL.

BACK AGAIN.

BACK again at Sandhaven! The ugly red-brick parsonage, the fishermen's hovels in the mean straggling village, the low, flat, sandy shore in front, the swampy, brown fields behind, and in the foreground a slight girlish figure pacing restlessly up and down in the October wind, between the house and the sea. How dull—how hateful it all was! Violet had been home a month now. At first it had not been so bad. Her father was pleased at her engagement. There had been a little flutter of excitement about it at her return. The few neighbours had come up with smiles and congratulations, and Violet had blushed very becomingly, and had told everyone that she was "very happy," after the manner of young ladies engaged to be married; and her father had patted her on the back, and was quite affectionate, and even deferential, in his manner to her, for of course, when a girl is about to marry a man worth ten thousand a-year, she becomes a person of importance at once. But after a few weeks Violet became used to the homage and the being made much of. She got tired of waiting; her old life had become insupportable to her; the weary days dragged themselves away, one after the other, with frightful slowness; it seemed to her as if the time would never pass away that must elapse before the completion of her happiness. But was she happy?

Look at her now, as she paces up and down restlessly, almost wildly, crushing up two or three closely written sheets of letter paper in her small white hands. Violet does not look at all like a happy bride. One of the letters in her hand is from her lover. He writes to her often, almost every day. His letters are very devoted and lover-like, full of protestations of affection and of entreaties to be allowed to come down to Sandhaven to see her, a petition which Violet will in no manner grant. She is too painfully conscious of the threadbare carpets, the battered and meagre furniture, the cold or hashed mutton of the daily parsonage fare to allow her rich lover to come down to spy out the exceeding nakedness of the land; so she kept putting him off, never telling him exactly that she did not want him to come, but making one excuse after another; her father was going away one week, or an aunt would be coming to occupy the one spare room for a few days, or she herself thought she should go to her uncle's for a day or two, but she hoped he would be able to come by-and-by; and in her own mind she was perfectly determined that he should not come down to Sandhaven, but should make her father's acquaintance in Eaton Place, when they went up to town in November, and where he and she would appear to him in an atmosphere of wealth and comfort. David Lennard's letter, to-day, was full of this wished-for visit to Sandhaven. He was so sorry he could not come this week. Did Violet think her father could receive him the week after? He did so long to see his little darling again, the days were so long without her; and much more in this strain. But Violet had barely skimmed through this production once; it was to the other letter in her hand that she kept referring to, over and over again, with a face full of trouble and disturbance. It was from Mrs. Barrington, written from some country house in Yorkshire, where she and Janet were staying; and there was one sentence in the letter which Violet kept reading over and over again, until she knew every word of it by heart. "Rather to our surprise," wrote Mrs. Barrington, "we found that Kit was staying here. He and Janet seem quite to have taken to each other again. They had a long ride together yesterday. At one time, I used to fancy that Janet was rather too fond of him, and knowing what Kit is, I should be sorry if it came to anything; but after my last lesson in match-making, Miss Violet, I don't mean ever to interfere in young ladies' arrangements again; and if Janet likes to marry him, they can live very well on her money, so I shall not raise any objections."

"No, I cannot, cannot bear it!" cried Violet aloud, as she read this over the twentieth time. And then she walked down towards the sea, among the sand heaps, where no one could see her from the house or the village, and flung herself down upon the soft, white sand, in a perfect storm of misery and anger. Her Kit, her hero, her lover, who had sworn to love her to his dying day; was it possible that he could already have forgotten her, and be making love to another woman, and that woman Janet, of all people in the world! That hateful Janet, with her money, who seemed to be for ever standing in her path! And Violet, who had with much pains and trouble secured to herself the rich lover she coveted, who had all the

good things of this world in prospect—houses, lands, jewels, clothes, wealth enough to make every woman she met envious of her good fortune. Violet, lying full length upon the sandheaps, with the October wind blowing in little gusts over her head, buried her face in her hands, and cried and sobbed her very heart out.

Presently there came footsteps towards her, and though it was only Luke Robinson, her father's curate, Violet drew herself up at once into a more elegant and dignified position, and felt vexed to be caught with red eyes—for after all was he not a man? And had he not once wished to be her lover?

"Miss Clayton, won't you catch cold? And—and—my dear Miss Clayton, you have been crying. I feel so distressed. Is it possible that you are unhappy? Is there anything wrong?—the matter, I mean. Oh! if I could only help you!"

He sat down beside her, and took her hand. He was only a curate, and he was weak-eyed, and he stammered in the most irritating manner, but he was fond of her, this poor young man. He looked upon her as an angel, a goddess, a something far removed above him. He knew that she could never return his love. One more worthy of her had wooed and won her, but still he had enshrined her in his heart as his idol, to be worshipped for ever, and he could imagine no higher, more blessed fate than, like some knight-errant of old, to die in her service.

"What is the matter; can't I help you?" he said again, with real distress in his voice and pale-coloured eyes.

"Oh, no! Thank you, Mr. Robinson; nothing is the matter; of course a girl can't think about leaving her home for ever, and—so many things and people she loves, without feeling it a little." Violet, with a male spectator, became at once the interesting heroine, and almost believed herself in the truth of the little speeches she uttered, while she looked up at her adorer with pretty, piteous eyes.

"You—you will be sorry to leave Sandhaven?" stammered the poor young man, getting red up to the very roots of his hay-coloured hair.

She could not, of course, care much, but she might, perhaps, be just a little sorry to bid good-bye to him. And if but one of those crystal tears had been shed over a faint regret at parting with him, then indeed Luke Robinson would deem himself a happy man! But Violet, to whom to flirt came as natural as the air she breathed, felt that the topic was becoming personal, and therefore dangerous, and dexterously steered clear of the subject.

"It will be such a change, such a responsibility, to be so rich, you know, Mr. Robinson."

"Ah, true," he answered sadly, feeling conscious at once of the immensity of the gap which would divide the rich and beautiful Mrs. Lennard from himself, the poor Sandhaven curate. But he was a good young man; he could not fathom her sorrows, but he bethought him that he might even yet comfort her somewhat. "Yet, if riches are well employed, Miss Clayton," he said seriously, for it seemed presumption to advise one so far above him; "you remember, perhaps, my sermon on Sunday evening; you will forgive me for saying so, but—I thought of you when I wrote that sermon."

"Indeed!" said Violet, raising her pretty head in innocent surprise. "You must not think me very rude, Mr. Robinson, but I did not listen much to your sermon. I was sleepy I think; the church was so hot and stuffy; and I quite forget what it was about."

Poor Mr. Robinson stammered out some unintelligible excuses, and went off red down to the very ends of his fingers.

Violet chuckled a little over his discomfiture. She had a perfect talent for snubbing people who bored her, and with such innocent unconsciousness and simplicity, that she succeeded in snubbing without ever giving offence.

"A gentlemen in the dining-room to see you, miss," said Martha the housemaid, coming up suddenly and noiselessly behind her across the sand heaps.

CHAPTER XII.

"KIT, ARE YOU MAD?"

"Good gracious!" cried Violet, springing to her feet, and, with the unfeeling instinct of her sex, putting up both her hands to smooth her ruffled locks, "how you startled me, Martha! A gentleman, did you say? Great heavens, girl!" surveying the maid from head to foot with absolute consternation, for Martha had evidently been cleaning the grates; her apron was black, her sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and her face was begrimed with smudges. A sense of her awful condition burst upon Violet as she beheld her. "I hope to goodness you did not open the door to him!" she cried, looking at her in horror.

"Yes, miss, I did."

"Good heavens, girl, you look as if you had been up the chimney!" And all the way up to the house Violet was thinking a great deal more of her vexation at Martha's appearance than of any pleasure to be gained from David Lennard's unlooked for arrival. For, of course, it was he. In spite of all her letters and prohibitions, he had chosen to come down to take her by surprise—for the day, probably. She felt as angry and cross with him as she could be, and yet, as she turned the handle of the sitting-room door, she thought to herself rapidly. "At all events I hope he will have brought me a present." A woman down to the tips of her worldly little fingers was Violet Clayton.

"Violet," said someone as she opened the door springing forward to meet her.

"Kit!" in deep dismay! In all her fancies she had never thought of this. "What on earth brings you?" Violet had turned as pale as any lily, and leant back trembling against the door she had just closed behind her. And Kit stretched out his arms to her.

"Child, you bring me! come and kiss me before I tell you what I have come to say." And David Lennard's betrothed wife, such was the power that this man had over her, laid her head on his breast, and was gathered into his arms. One moment of happy forgetfulness, and then Violet shook herself free from his embrace.

"This is very wrong, Kit! Why on earth did you come; why could you not let me alone? I thought," she added coldly, "you were making

love to Janet Maxwell in Yorkshire. I heard so from my aunt."

"I daresay you did; but I left Yorkshire three days ago. I was telegraphed for. As to making love to Janet, you know you don't believe that."

A great joy was in her heart, but Violet was recovering herself. "You know I am engaged to David — I am to be married to him next month," she said.

"How many times has David Lennard been down here?" he asked.

"Never once! I thought you were he. I am sure all the servants did, and so will my father when he comes in. Pray go! for you will get me into a dreadful scrape."

Kit Barrington was silent for a minute. There was a suppressed triumph in his face and manner which were utterly puzzling and bewildering to Violet. She could not understand it at all.

"You don't suppose I have come all this way for nothing, Violet."

"What on earth have you come for, then? and please don't go on calling me Violet, it doesn't sound well."

"Darling, I have come to ask you once more to be my wife!" he said.

"Kit, are you mad?" She stamped her foot angrily and turned away from him. "Why do you re-open the subject? You know I can't marry you; for, even if I was not engaged, you haven't money enough. I will not marry a poor man!"

"I know that very well, Violet, but I think you will marry me!"

"I will not!"

(To be continued.)

THE HEIR.

THE standard waves on the castle keep,
Born is the son and heir!
New born to the lord of lands rich and broad,
Of his gentle ladye fair.

Awake the old halls, glitter turrets and walls,
Up goes the lark with his lay,
And each busy wight dons a sudden delight—
Proud is the good Earl to-day!

The bells they ring out, blare trumpet and shout,
Noising it far and near;
Yes, never I ween, such May morning hath been,
This many and many a year.

Cherished hopes through long years slow dying of
fears,

Till worn to a deathless despair,
Sped at last, in delight beyond fancy's flight,
And fairer than dream'd of all fair.

Now will the sire, home from battle returned,
Dangle his babe on his knee,
Oft the warrior, for joy, play the boy with his boy,
With his stripling a stripling be.

Oh! wist ye his pride, when they twain, side by
side,

Forth to the foray shall fare!
But proudest of all when the bridegroom tall
Back his beautiful bride shall bear!

By-and-by on his knee will he take, happy he!
 Child of his child where all blend;
 Till, blessing and blest, he shall go to his rest,
 Leaving a line without end.

The banner it waves on the castle keep
 And another dawn breaks unaware,
 All the revel and rout hardly yet dying out,—
 Dead is the son and heir!

ROBERT STEGGALL.

A MAN-HUNT.

BY HUGH COLEMAN DAVIDSON.

FOR thrilling excitement there is nothing to be compared with a man-hunt. Besides combining all the fascination of a fox-hunt, with the danger of a tiger-hunt, it has a weird, horrible charm of its own, difficult to describe, because so different from everything else in the wide world. Such, at least, is the experience of one whose life has not been uneventful, yet to whom adventures have come unsought and unwished for. To see your own fellow-creature running from you as if you were some accursed thing; to strain nerve and muscle in a frantic race to capture him before he has done hurt to himself or others; to mark his inhuman face, now livid with terror, now flushed with rage, as he glances behind him, while inch by inch, and foot by foot, his eager pursuers gain upon him; to wonder at the thoughts and feelings of that poor hunted thing in whom reason has yielded to some strange instinct that teaches him to double with the cunning of a hare, and to struggle with the strength and ferocity of a tiger; to listen to the panting, the hoarse shouts, the hurrying footsteps, as all rush onward in that headlong chase in which the only order is one in front and a confused mob behind; to watch his pace slacken, as, finding flight to be useless, he half makes up his mind to turn and fight, and then speeds onward again with a last despairing effort; and finally to behold hunter and hunted roll over and over in a terrible grip that threatens a speedy death to both—it makes my heart throb even now, though many a long year has passed by since I witnessed that scene.

Frank Gayford and I were spending a few months at Arbory, a pretty little village in the South of England. It consisted merely of one short picturesque street of old-fashioned houses of every shape and size, hiding themselves behind a wealth of jasmine and wisteria and vine, and peeping at you through their narrow lattice windows and open doorways, for the very roofs had gone down beneath that tide of greenery and colour, and the red chimneys, like the funnels of a sunken steamer, were almost the only visible traces of man's handiwork. Southward stretched the Downs, with here and there a stunted tree, resembling in the distance a twig tossed on the top of an enormous billow; but at their base was many a copse and covert, and here in a well-wooded valley nestled Arbory, like a chicken under its mother's wing. Right and left you might see deep rutted lanes twisting laboriously up steep hills, or swiftly descending into some flower-filled glade, where the glisten of silver told of a merry little streamlet, even if you could not hear its babble.

It was indeed a lovely peaceful spot. Frank, being an artist, was in ecstasies when we lighted upon it, and before very long he had discovered capital lodgings, with a nice clean and not fussy landlady; and so in the sweetest of cottages we found rest for a time. There were a few shops for necessities; but the inhabitants were mostly smock-frocked labourers, besides, of course, those inevitable three P's, the parson, the publican and the policeman, and also a red-whiskered attorney who picked up a scanty livelihood by occasionally setting the rustics by the ears. But this we considered rather an advantage than otherwise; for as Frank wanted to paint and I to write and study new characters and village life, Arbory was excellently adapted for our purpose. Frank was several years my junior: headstrong, rash, generous and as brave as a lion, a better fellow and truer friend never breathed. But I must admit that I did not approve of all his wild ways; and to him I am indebted for the adventure I am about to relate.

Our cottage was rather rude in its deportment, for it turned its back upon the road: it faced the Downs and looked out upon a steep lawn, sloping upwards, fringed with acacias, and surmounted by a fine old apple-tree, under the shade of which I used to sit and write and revile the gnats. And here I was one glorious afternoon, lounging carelessly in my chair and dreaming of scenes that I had not sufficient bodily energy to transfer to paper; when my attention was arrested by something white, moving very swiftly on the side of the Downs. It was evidently a man, yet his costume struck me as so singular that I watched him until he disappeared among the trees. I should probably have thought no more about the matter, had not Frank, in a highly excited state, come rushing up about half-an-hour later.

"There's a madman loose on the Downs," he cried: "dressed only in a shirt. He has killed a sheep and driven a poor girl nearly out of her wits."

"Indeed!" I remarked, unable to sympathize either with the sheep or with a poor girl that I didn't know.

"Such fun!" he went on, rather inconsequently I thought. "We're going after him. Come along! You mustn't miss it for anything; it will make a grand incident in your new tale."

This was a horse of quite another colour; its stables were a good deal nearer home. To be candid, I confess I didn't relish the idea, which was all well enough for a noble savage, but scarcely suited to a quietly-disposed author. Although I cannot truthfully be called a coward—for I have done some bold things in my tales—I don't lay claim to any Quixotic heroism; and to turn out of a comfortable chair and face a dangerous lunatic, who could not be supposed to have the slightest respect for our insular prejudices against personal violence—well, I felt it would be nicer and more profitable to write about such a hare-brained adventure than actually to take part in it. So I protested:

"I daresay the incident might come in useful; but as an onlooker sees most of the game, I had better watch it from a little distance. This will be a capital spot. Sitting here, I can quietly note down everything just as it happens."

"Nonsense! If you don't feel a thing, you can't

write about it properly, any more than you can paint it. How on earth could you in cold blood sit down to describe a fierce hand-to-hand fight with a maniac?"

I replied with a smile; not because the idea he suggested was pleasant, but because I scarcely liked to express my feelings in words.

"Come along—do," he exclaimed impatiently, going off a few yards and looking back.

"Of course, as an artist you should be close at hand," I began, "but for a writer, such minute details—"

"You're not afraid, surely," he interrupted, with a contemptuous curl of the lip that roused all the latent heroism in my nature.

"Afraid! oh, no, I'm not afraid. I was merely looking at the matter from a professional standpoint; but, of course, if you want me to take care of you, I'll go."

This was a nasty cut, and I was sorry for it immediately afterwards; but Frank was so pertinacious in dragging me into this disagreeable affair that the snub was not altogether unmerited. However, with all his impulsiveness, his temper was not easily ruffled; and, smiling good-humouredly, he seized my arm and hurried me away down the street. He was so full of the coming hunt that he could talk of nothing else; but, though I was anxious enough for further details, hoping to hear that the maniac was not so dangerous after all, yet Frank's enthusiasm carried him to a pitch that made me shudder. He exerted all his imaginative powers to depict a dreadful chase in which—though all came right in the end—we had such hair-breadth escapes as I like to encounter only in a tale.

"Is he armed?" I asked, with a view to making some slight preparation against contingencies.

"Not with a knife or anything of that sort," answered Frank, rather gloomily; but his face brightened, as he added reassuredly, "But, you know, these madmen have superhuman strength, and in their hands a stout oak-branch or sapling or even a big flint is a formidable weapon. So we're sure to have some fun."

I assure you, he spoke in genuine earnest. He loved excitement and considered nothing to be such unless it was dangerous. It was his nature, for which he was no more responsible than I was for mine. And not having that odd hankering for standing on the brink of another world that he had, I ventured upon saying:

"But, Frank, hadn't we better take weapons of some sort? Fair play is a jewel, you know; and this madman will be meeting us on very unfair terms."

"For close quarters, there's nothing like fists," laughed Frank, who was a capital boxer, whereas I had never had the gloves on in my life.

"That's true enough," I assented, more to pacify him than anything else; "but suppose he should cut us over before we get to close quarters?"

As usual, he brushed aside my arguments with a terribly illogical broom. "That would be awkward certainly, but we must trust to dodging him. Besides, look at our numbers. Ah! here we are."

We had arrived at our suggestive rendezvous, the village pump: an antiquated circular affair, half wood and half stonework, standing in the bend of the street. Upon the grass around it

were grouped about a score of able-bodied villagers under the command of the policeman; and it turned out that they were waiting for us, Frank, in his usual free-and-easy way, having promised that we should both assist. Although nothing—not even a travelling circus—can stir your genuine rustic into enthusiasm, those bovine faces in such striking proximity to the cold water were not calculated to make me feel more heroic. Not that they expressed agitation or fear or excitement; they simply expressed nothing at all, unless vacant staring eyes and open mouths and ruddy brown cheeks can be called expressive. But it was their collective attitude that struck me most. Instead of standing apart and heaving an occasional monosyllable at one another's heads as usual, they were clustered silently together, only moving to wheel round and watch Frank and me more intently. They looked for all the world like a flock of frightened sheep, with the policeman a few paces in advance as the attendant sheep-dog. Anything more unlike an eager bristling pack of hounds, held in check only by the dread of the huntsman's whip, can hardly be imagined; yet these were to be my companions in this perilous hunt. I sidled up to Frank, who was gaily inspecting his pack.

"Hadn't we better take Mr. Tape and some others?" I suggested.

"Not a bit of it," replied Frank, never willing to let any one else take the lead, which he knew the lawyer would be sure to dispute with him. "Well, Crawley, we may as well make a start," he added to the policeman.

"Aye, aye, sir. We've only been waiting for you, gentlemen."

So Frank and the policeman and I leading, and the others following in a disorderly mob, away we trooped through the village, upon which such a panic had fallen that all the doors were shut and fastened, while many an anxious face peeped out from the vine-framed windows. These superstitious villagers considered a lunatic to be as potent for mischief as the Old Gentleman himself; and though I certainly did not go so far with them, I cheerfully admit that these warlike preparations added but little to my peace of mind.

The road lay between great sod-banks, almost covered with a golden sheet of gorse, and studded with bunches of purple heather; and further on we came to a deep cutting through a red sandy soil, where the martins had their nests behind a screen of honeysuckle. In front of us towered the Downs, with a lace-work fringe of oak, and elm, and chestnut at their base, with white patches of sheep, and sometimes a chalk-pit glistening in the sunlight; on each side of us lay the chequered squares of smiling cornland and meadow, whence came the occasional tinkle of a bell; and overhead the larks were singing as merrily as if hawks were "gone extinct like the mammoth." But, of a sudden, the road took a sharp turn, and went away westward; and we, halting at a gateway, prepared to go across country.

"Come along," said Frank, vaulting the gate. "We'll draw this covert first," pointing to a thick wood of considerable size on the other side of the field.

"Look here, Frank," I remonstrated; "we haven't arranged any plans yet. Unity is strength; we'll stick together."

"Booh!" he returned in his unpleasantly brusque way. "We must spread out."

"Spread out!"

"Of course."

I had got him by the arm now, so as the better to argue with this reckless fellow.

"But remember the bundle of sticks," I urged. "If this madman takes us separately, he can soon dispose of us; but all together we shall have no great difficulty in capturing him. Frank, we were meant for better things than a coroner's inquest." And I began to hum the Canadian boat-song. My intention was to soothe him, though I had firmly made up my mind that this madman should come to no harm at my hands.

Frank, however, was quite unreasonable. "And in the meantime, he seizes the opportunity to make a clean bolt of it. A pretty fiasco indeed, after all our trouble! No, no. If we surround the wood where Crawley says he has hidden himself, and advance carefully upon the centre, we shall force him to break covert somewhere or other, and each of us will stand an equal chance of having some fun. We can't help running into him in the open."

I was surprised that any one should talk in this wild fashion. Indeed it began to dawn upon me that such a harum-scarum fellow was no fit associate for a peaceful plier of the pen. We argued the matter a little longer; but Frank always would have his own way, and the only compromise to which he would agree was that we should hunt in couples.

"Well, then, I'll be your linked battalion, Frank," I said with alacrity.

He was rather dubious on this point: "It would be better for you and me each to take charge of one of these noodles."

I ventured to suggest that we might have enough to do to take charge of ourselves; adding with a feeble attempt at humour, "A horse and a donkey couldn't be expected to work well in double harness."

The compliment settled the matter; and on reaching the wood, we spread out in couples, Frank and I being together.

At last our men were posted. A signal was passed round the circle, and the advance began. Now that I was fairly in for this adventure I began to feel my spirits rise, though I still blamed Frank for having dragged me into it at all. Strange how this craving for excitement creeps upon and draws one, half-resistingly and half-willingly, onward wherever danger lurks. I felt it now, perhaps almost as keenly as Frank himself, though it had drawn him further a-field. But there was little time for meditation, the undergrowth being thick and thorny, and all our attention being concentrated on the search. The trees were chiefly oaks and elms, planted closely together, with their branches interlaced so that only a few spangles of sunlight fell upon the tangled thorns below. The place was gloomy in the extreme and apparently deserted by bird and beast, and the silence, undisturbed by even the hum of insects, was quite oppressive. But by-and-by, as we pressed onward, we could occasionally hear the crack of a breaking stick, or the hushed voices of our fellow beaters, and sometimes I caught a glimpse of one nearer than the rest, moving stealthily among the trees. Not a sign of the wretched madman, however; not a trace of a footprint anywhere.

I was beginning to think we were on the wrong track, when a leaf fluttered to my feet; and as not a breath of air was stirring, I looked up and beheld almost immediately above me an awful pitiable object, never in this world to be forgotten. It was the face of a man, but the expression was that of a wild beast. The features must at one time have been handsome—almost classical in their shapeliness, but they had grown haggard with mental suffering, and at this moment were contorted by diabolical rage, tempered, however, by a look that hovered between uncertain dread and watchful cunning; and the long dark beard, streaked with grey, was clutched in the hand. But the eyes—their fierce wild stare will follow me to the grave. Their light was not dimmed, but it was not the light of men that blazed in them: it was like the fiery glare of a tempestuous sky, into which a flood of angry crimson has been poured—a glare, caused by the same sun, yet so different from the lovely pink sunset of a summer day. There lurked in them a power of horrible fascination, for, do what I would, I could not withdraw my gaze. The madman remained perfectly still, as if knowing the difficulty of seeing a motionless object and ignorant that he was already seen.

And here I must mention a circumstance that has struck me as very strange: I was too agitated to notice it at the time, and only did so when I visited the scene a few days later. Although it was evident at a glance that he had entirely lost what we call reason—and this fact was subsequently attested by others—yet a species of animal instinct seemed to have sprung up to supply the deficiency. The tree in which he had hidden himself was a large oak, with firm spreading branches and plenty of leaves, all the other trees around being elms. About twenty-five feet from the ground he had constructed a kind of nest, just where two large boughs curved together and the foliage was the thickest; and for better concealment, he had collected a great number of branches—torn, observe, not from the same tree, which would have attracted notice; nor from the neighbouring elms; but from other oaks, so that there should be no difference in the leaves to arrest attention. These branches were interwoven with the tree so carefully as to hide his whole body except his face, which was now glaring at me over his barricade, and so cunningly that I should not have noticed it but for the falling leaf and the sight of that terrible face afterwards. My acquaintance with out-and-out lunatics has not been very extensive, nor do I wish to extend it, but I cannot help thinking this circumstance very remarkable and tending to show that man deprived of reason actually reverts to the animal stage of existence.

I remember many years ago meeting a vast number of lunatics on their way to a new asylum. We were walking up a long, steep hill at the time; and a horseman came in sight, riding at full gallop and swaying from side to side, so that it was evident he was drunk; of a sudden, he was shot upon his head, but was luckily unhurt. The lunatics stopped the horse and discussed the accident in the most rational manner, one of them even saying—"If it hadn't been for his top hat he would have been killed." But it must not be forgotten that these unfortunates were very different from the poor wild creature in the oak.

their flames were burning irregularly only at one corner, each of them having his special mania and consistently sticking to it. One of them—so the attendant told me—imagined himself to be a pump and opened his mouth when you took him by the hand, clearly a typical idea of Parliamentary representation; another fancied himself to be Robinson Crusoe, “living in the midst of alarms;” another was Charles the First, after he had lost his head, in which, as in most cases of the sort, you may perceive a germ of truth; and so on. But, as we afterwards ascertained, this wretched madman’s brain was altogether deranged: in his eyes everything was distorted, hideous, terrible, and therefore to be destroyed. Thus, like Ajax, he had attacked a flock of sheep, and, but for our numbers, some of us would probably have fared ill at his hands. His head must have been like a nest-full of angry wasps, his wildness never leaving him, his every word and deed and gesture showing the madman—a burden to himself and a terror to others.

His history was very sad. He was the eldest son of a rich and good family—singularly amiable and gentle in his disposition—a student, yet not altogether averse from field sports. But one miserable day he was thrown on his head while out hunting, and though the doctors said he was suffering merely from a slight concussion of the brain, he recovered his bodily health only to live on to the end of his days as a dangerous maniac. His family, shrinking from the pain and humiliation of exposing their secret to the world, shut him up in the house of which he was to have been the master. He had somehow or other contrived to escape and they were searching for him at this very moment. So, he who had once been fondled by a doting mother, who had prattled his simple prayers at her knee, who had grown up to man’s estate beloved and respected by all, was now reduced to a life-long grovelling condition, inestimably lower than that of the brutes. Truly it is awful to think that “to such base uses may we come.” It is one of those things from which we recoil in rebellious horror and never can understand why they should be so.

All this time Frank had been pushing a-head, without ever thinking of what I was doing, but happening to turn round and perceiving me motionless, he exclaimed—

“Come along, old star-gazer! You’re rather out of your element here. You won’t—” Almost in a moment he was standing underneath the oak. “By George! my fortune would be made if I could only paint that face,” he said, flinging off his coat.

“Good heavens, Frank! What are you going to do?” I asked, running to his side.

“Do! Go up the tree, of course.”

He was a tall manly-looking young fellow; and as he stood there nerving himself for the effort, with tightened muscles, with a bright flush on his handsome daring face, and perhaps with a rather scornful look in his blue eyes, I couldn’t help admiring him, though I regarded him as little less a lunatic than the wild creature overhead. It was foolish of me, no doubt, but I admit that my hand trembled as I laid it upon his shoulder, and a mist swept before my sight, and there was a strange huskiness in my voice as I pleaded with him. Let sickly sentimentalists say what they may, this

calm determined way of walking into almost certain death carries an irresistible charm for most of us, and I was never so fond and so proud of my young friend as at that moment. But he *was* my friend, and so I felt bound to exert what little authority I had in the attempt to dissuade him. Temporarily usually succeeded best with him, so I said—

“Look here, Frank, we must at any rate wait until the rest of our party come up.”

“And give them a chance of getting up the tree first—not I. The luck has fallen in my way, and I’m not going to run the risk of losing it. So come, stand aside, old chap.”

“Frank, it’s sheer madness. He can hurl you to the ground before ever you get near him.”

“I intend to collar the poor fellow and prevent him from doing more mischief to himself or anybody else.” And before I could interfere, he was climbing the tree.

Clearly my best plan was to summon the others, and for this purpose I gave a couple of loud “view-holloas.” The effect was magical: our beaters fell in like a circle of tissue paper caught by a flame. I could not help laughing; for I have an unfortunate way of laughing at all sorts of improper times, otherwise I should probably not have commenced this narrative by laughing at myself. Until that moment I had thought the rustic incapable of more than a slouching walk, so that the rapidity with which they formed upon me as pivot was quite a revelation, while, to do him justice, the policeman showed himself to be an active man also. However, I scarcely think they would have run so fast to meet me, had they not supposed that I was doing the very thing they would have done themselves—namely, standing on safe vantage-ground and hallooing the madman away; for, when the true state of affairs became known—which it did only by degrees—there was manifested a very general disposition to sink off. This retrograde movement had to be stopped.

“Look here:” I said, “at first I had as little liking for this business as any of you; but now that we’re in for it, we must go through with it. Mr. Gayford is your friend as well as mine, and I’m sure none of you will allow harm to come to him, if you can prevent it. The most likely thing to happen is for both of them to tumble to the ground, so we had better stand under the tree and try to break their fall.”

They were good enough fellows at heart. True, they did not belong to that class that will remain patient and inactive under a deadly hail of shot and shell, but when a course of action was pointed out to them, they were ready to follow it. And without a murmur they took up a position under the oak.

Frank’s progress had been very tedious, many of the lower branches being too weak to support his weight and too strong to allow of easy climbing. But by this time he had reached one of the bigger boughs and, swinging his legs over it, paused for a moment before going higher. We heard a sudden rustling overhead, and a few twigs and leaves fluttered to the ground. The miserable hunted creature had sprung erect, uncertain whether to menace Frank or to flee. He was a great strong muscular man, dressed only in a shirt and a pair of socks, much tattered and stained; and his terror was so pitiable that I felt as if we were engaged in an act of

cruelty, instead of trying to protect him against himself and others against him. That he possessed some kind of reasoning power, has been seen already; but that his control over it was of the weakest, he now showed. Had he remained where he was, his capture would have been quite impossible: there being some eight or nine feet of thick smooth trunk immediately below his stronghold, he could easily have repulsed Frank and indeed all of us. But the strain of waiting and watching the slow approach of one whom he regarded as a deadly enemy was more than he could endure, and after a moment or two of indecision, he ran out on the bough with all the agility of a monkey. With eyes rivetted on his every movement we followed underneath, expecting to see him topple and fall, but when he had got us all together in a group, he turned quickly, darted to the far end of the tree, sprang into the next elm, slid to the ground and disappeared, long before we had recovered from our consternation. There was no denying the fact that he had completely outwitted us. I must say that I felt humiliated and more than ever anxious to capture him. Frank, who was still seated astride of a bough, uttered an impatient exclamation, dropped to the ground, and started in pursuit, shouting to us to follow.

Careless of briar and thorn, we stream along the dark silent wood, now echoing with many a cry of eager haste or fallen comrade and with the disordered rush of trampling feet. Rent clothes, torn flesh alike unheeded, we press onward into the bright sunshine where that mad creature is tearing along in front of us. He has gained the next spur already and is making for the open country, perhaps for that copse away to the left. His head is thrown slightly back and often turned towards us, and his feet are flung forward in the determined way of a thorough-bred horse, when nearly exhausted. Frank comes swinging round the corner: he has taken the path and so gone rather out of his way.

"Come on, old fellow! He's nearly done."

"Stick together," I pant.

But Frank rushes by, his body as firm and supple as if he were only just beginning the quarter-mile. A stiff thorn fence lies before us: oh! for a gap: I strain my eyes but see nothing except this uncompromising *chevaux-de-frise*. That lunatic Frank claps his hat tightly on his head, puts his hands in his pockets, and with head down, goes bursting through it. And now it's my turn. Thank heaven! I'm alive and through it. And I can't resist the temptation of stopping to look back at it, and certainly it is wonderful that I'm not stuck up there like a butchered caterpillar.

"Hey, maister, how did yer get through?" asks our leading rustic, craning at the obstacle.

"That's just what I've been trying to find out," I shout back at him, and rush off.

These confounded turnips will be the death of me. The soil between the ridges is wet clay, which, caking thickly on my boots, makes running almost out of the question; while stumbling among the turnips on the top of the ridges is just as bad. Nor is this all, for the leaves are full of water which is showered down upon our legs as they brush by. Even Frank has moderated his pace to an easy jog-trot, and so I manage to come up with him. And now, thank goodness, we are

in a meadow, the cattle gazing at us with sleepy wonderment, and the madman away in the ploughland beyond. Surely that will stop him. But he gets through it at last, though we have gained very considerably. By this time our field is wildly scattered, some having even abandoned the chase entirely, while others are panting along in twos and threes. A few of the older men have taken up a commanding position upon the Downs; knowing that the hill is the first place a hare would make for, they have concluded by some curious process of reasoning, that the madman will follow the same tactics, sweeping round in a circle and coming back on the high ground. And, sure enough, he seems to have taken a sharp turn, for that tattered white shirt is nowhere to be seen. Then comes a shout from the Downs. They are waving to us; what on earth do they mean?

"Which way did he go?" asks Frank in a hoarse whisper.

"Perhaps they see him. Isn't that something white—there?"

"By George! yes; we nearly missed him."

He is stealing along on the far side of yonder sod-fence, higher up than we are, Frank puts on a terrific spurt; over the fence, both of us: now we are back on the Downs, the madman making for the wood whence we started him. But the rustics bear down upon him in a body, and he turns again and goes westward. Frank and I running side by side barely a hundred yards away. We are gaining rapidly every step. And as I see that poor faltering hunted thing with his shirt hanging in rags, I shudder at the thought that he too must have gone through that thorn-fence. See, his speed slackens: his wild face is turned towards us more frequently; we can almost hear his panting. Suddenly he stops and confronts us; he means fighting. But no, he is off again, running as vigorously as ever.

"Great heavens, the chalk-pit!" cries Frank, and shoots a dozen yards ahead.

Surely the poor creature never means to destroy himself! Yet straight before him I can see a glistening streak of white, which I now remember is the edge of a precipitous chalk-pit. It must be ninety feet at least from the top to the bottom, which, consisting chiefly of flints, resembles the riddled heap of pebbles in the midst of a mason's lime, so that a fall cannot but mean a horrible death. I scarcely dare to raise my eyes; but I do, and see Frank make a desperate rush at him. Both roll over together: the madman is up and over; Frank springs up, totters, falls. And a great cry of horror comes from the frightened men behind me.

How I managed to reach the brink I cannot tell; and when at last I stood there, I was unable to look down; but I do know that I staggered with delight when I heard Frank's voice calling me. Yet the sight was enough to make the blood run cold, for Frank, seated upon a dangerous, narrow ledge of crumbling chalk, was holding the madman, who, like some desperate animal, was clinging to the ledge. His livid face, with its wild, staring eyes and dishevelled hair, was within a foot of Frank's. I shuddered to think what might happen if both should get on the ledge together, though the most imminent danger was their both tumbling to the bottom.

"I'm all right, old fellow," called out Frank

cheerily. As he was about ten feet below me, there was no chance of helping him, and the soft chalk might give way at any moment. He had dug his heels firmly into it and was leaning forward, holding the madman by the arms just above the elbows and endeavouring to pull him up higher, while the latter was clutching the ledge and gradually working his hands nearer to Frank's feet.

The activity of the brain at such a time as that is truly wonderful, the thoughts flashing through it with the rapidity of lightning. My mind went back to a scene that had happened some years before. One summer evening as I was walking by a rocky coast in the north of England, I was startled by seeing a woman in the water. I scrambled down and pulled her out, and found her to be quietly insane. Doubtless, she had intended to drown herself but had repented when in the water. Clearly, I thought, her case was similar to this wretched madman's, and so it turned out. As I was afterwards told, when he sprang over the cliff, he happened to alight on the ledge and, finding himself slipping off, twisted round and held on; whereupon Frank, brave fellow that he was, jumped down to his assistance.

But how was I to help Frank? To my horror, I saw that the madman had now got hold of his feet, and, by gradually pushing his hands under them, was raising them from their supports, and in consequence, the chalk was breaking away with terrible rapidity.

"Let him go, Frank—let him go," I said, in a hoarse whisper.

"I'll hold on while I can," returned Frank; "but this can't last much longer."

Oh, the anguish of seeing a fellow-creature perish before your eyes, and you incapable of stretching out a hand to save him! And here was my best friend in deadly peril.

"Frank! Frank! push him off; he'll kill you."

"Sure, I'll manage him, sir," said a voice by my side.

It was Alick Giles, the shepherd. My heart leaped at the sight of his long thick crook, for I thought I saw a chance of saving both of them; and kneeling down, we slipped it round Frank's waist and so held on. This gave him some additional support, though the difficulty of getting him out of his perilous position was no nearer solved than before. A rope would be quite useless; besides, the nearest cottage was a mile distant. Only one thing was practicable—to dig down to within reach of the ledge; and as the rest of our party came hurrying up, we set to work with poles and flints, and many of us only with our hands and feet. When once the top layer of soil and matted grassroots was got rid of, the chalk opposed but little difficulty; and we worked rather at one side of the ledge, so that none of the earth and stones should fall upon Frank. In about half an hour's time—and such a half-hour—our labour was completed. Then I, at one end of a living chain, crawled on my hands and knees along the groove we had made, until I could grasp Frank by the waist, whereupon the others began to pull us steadily backwards. But, to pull any one over that ledge was beyond our powers: the strain was terrible.

"I can't hold on any longer," gasped Frank.

Raising my head, I caught a brief glimpse of the

madman's face. The fierce light had died out of the eyes; the features had undergone a strange softening; the sad wistful pleading look was that of a dumb animal. His grasp slackened, without a word he loosened his hold, and so was gone for ever. In the moment of his death he was nearer to humanity than he had been for years before. Frank and I, sitting in safety on the top of the cliff, grasped one another's hands in silence.

A CURE FOR MELANCHOLY.

WE are constantly being reminded that "Merry England" is merry England no longer, and the question is often seriously discussed whether life is really worth living. The spirit of melancholy is abroad, and all are more or less subject to its baleful sway; all, that is, except children, and even they have lost, so it is said, very much of their wonted sprightliness and elasticity, in consequence of "over-pressure." Patent medicine vendors (with an eye to the main chance) tell us in every newspaper, and in the most pathetic language, that "over the sunshine of existence hangs a dark cloud," and they describe its causes and its "symptoms," which each reader may apply as he or she chooses; and staid medical practitioners, who have no particular nostrum to push, make a "good thing" out of the prevailing complaint. Lately a journal of repute devoted to the healing art, came forward with an article in which it set forth that almost all sorts and conditions of men are "visited by melancholy revealed only to their doctors, and sometimes to their domestic circle."

The cry is not a new one. It was heard when England was, according to tradition, a much "merrier" country than it is now; and it found expression both in prose and poetry, and more particularly the latter, as we shall presently see. The "spleen," as it was formerly called, has indeed been the dread of Englishmen, and the derision of their Gallic neighbours, for generations past. Among great men, and men who were not great, there have always been those to whom "the exaggeration of the natural and legitimate feelings of grief, despondency, and apprehension" (otherwise, perhaps, a fit of indigestion) has been, as it were, a second nature; who have been haunted by the grisly spectre, Death, or disturbed by imaginary debts, obligations, fear of poverty, and so on. How all this has affected some minds the case of Cowper is one out of a myriad of illustrations that might be cited; and Mrs. Unwin, the guardian angel of the unhappy poet of Olney, may be mentioned as one who eminently showed what the pure friendship and sympathy of woman can do to alleviate, if not dispel, the "blue devils."

Reference to Cowper, and previously to the poetry of melancholy, or hypochondria, or whatever it may be termed, recalls to mind at once a Dr. Edward Cobden, a former rector of Acton, near London, who wrote on the subject, invoking the Deity thus:—

Take from me life, or let me life enjoy,
And all my faculties with health employ.
Teach me, oh! teach me, Guardian Power, to find
In life or death, serenity of mind.

For when the hypochondria clouds the soul,
Nor steed, nor potent drug, nor cheerful bowl,
Nor plunging boldly in the chilling wave,
Nor hot sulphureous baths the wretch can save.
Nor frequent brushings of the rumpled skin,
Nor tintured steely draught, nor diet thin;
Nor town diversions, nor the rural ease,
Nor land, nor air itself, nor various seas;
If round the globe he to relieve his pain
Wanders, all climates are explored in vain.

Mr. Cobden's must have been a very bad case indeed!

Much more reassuring were the declarations of Matthew Green, who wrote about a century and a half ago; but who, despite his "cure for melancholy," died at the age of forty-five. But then he was a bachelor. What his fate might have been if he had had a good wife or other female relative to vent his "spleen" upon, and to comfort him, as far as possible, under the circumstances, it is bootless now to inquire. Here is his recipe:—

To cure the mind's wrong bias, spleen,
Some recommend the bowling green;
Some hilly walks; all exercise;
Fl'ing but a stone, the giant dies.
Laugh and be well. Monkeys have been
Extreme good doctors for the spleen;
And kitten, if the humour hit,
Has harlequined away the fit.
Since mirth is good in this behalf,
At some particulars let us laugh;
If spleen-fogs rise at break of day,
I clear my evening with a play,
Or to some concert take my way.
The company, with shine of lights,
The scenes of humour, music's flights,
Adjust and set the soul to rights.

So far, that is all very well for the dwellers in towns. But a concert may not always be available. Such poor souls, however, as have not the advantage of "music's flights," may seek relief in things nearer home:

In rainy days seek double guard,
Or spleen will surely be too hard
In such dull weather, so unfit,
To enterprise a work of wit.
When clouds one yard of azure sky,
That's fit for simile, deny,
I dress my face with studious looks,
And shorten tedious hours with books.
But if dull fogs invade the head,
That memory mudds not what is read,
I sit in window dry as ark,
And on the drowning world remark;
Or to some coffee-house I stray
For news, the manna of a day,
And from the hipped discourses gather
That politics go by the weather.
Sometimes I dress, with women sit,
And chat away the gloomy fit;
Quit the stiff garb of serious sense,
And wear a garb—impertinence;
Nor think nor speak with any pains.
But lay on fancy's neck the reins.

Such are the positive remedies the poet recommends. After his declaration that he never games, and rarely bets; that he is not a spendthrift, and that "reforming schemes to mend the world" are none of his, he goes on to say—

Happy the man, who, innocent,
Grieves not at ills he can't prevent;
His skiff does with the current glide,
Not puffing pulled against the tide.
He, paddling by the scuffling crowd,
Sees unconcerned life's wager rowed;

And when he can't prevent foul play,
Enjoys the folly of the fray.
Yet philosophic love of ease
I suffer not to prove disease;
But rise up in the virtuous cause
Of a free press and equal laws.

With which advice for the prevention and cure of melancholy we had better close. The sum and substance of it all is, that for a fit of the "blues" there is nothing like activity and a change from the routine of daily life, which change must be taken according to circumstances, and according as one's occupation or inclination runs, whether it be physical or mental. "Be not solitary, be not idle," said Robert Burton, the author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, but like a good many other preachers he did not act up to his own precept—at any rate, as regards solitariness.

C. H.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

BY COULSON KERNAHAN.

WESTWARD I walked, in contemplation
wrapt,
What time the sun the distant hills had capt
In aural splendour. Far athwart the glade
Long shadows lay, that flecked the sward with
shade,
As fingers of a hand invisible. The plough
The dew-bathed fields had carved in ridges neat,
From which there rose an earthy fragrance
sweet,
Like a cool hand upon a fevered brow.
The haughty sun had stooped, and hovered o'er
His silent world, as mothers bend to trace
The perfect peace, the fragile, flower-like grace
Of sleeping babes, whose angels stand before
The great white Throne, and see the Father's
face.

And much I mused with anxious eye, and brow
Thought-bound, on this vain span of fierce
desires,
And mad heart-throbbings, all-consuming fires
Of seething thoughts—this stern-eyed, iron Now;
These days lethargic, when the soul is clad
In listless slumber; midnight wakings sad
(Foreshadowings of the judgment-day to come)
When lone we lie, self-sentenced, still and dumb
As in a grave, naked and bare, bereft
Of human presence—when our souls are left
Alone with God. From starless solitudes
Athwart the night an awful Presence broods:
The shadows pass; the earth-cloud lifts and
folds,
A radiant shape the trembling soul beholds
Through Death's pale curtain loom! With mazed
eyes
And wond'ring heart, she scarce dare recognize
In that pure form, clear in heaven's crystal light,
Her image perfect, in God's likeness bright.

Such were my thoughts, as slow I wandered on,
Adown the dell; but ever and anon
Across my dreams and brightest hopes there
came

A sullen doubting, as the lightning's flame
Athwart the sky—a haunting sense of shame,
As something incomplete, till dull despair
Cast his dark mantle o'er each vision fair.

And much I strove, with troubled brow, to solve
The mournful problem whence these doubtings
rise,

That o'er the soul, like lightless worlds, revolve—
Black orbs of darkness, frowning from the skies!
"How is it," said I, "that no day is given
Of perfect peace? Across the fairest heaven
Earth draws night-brooding clouds: our noblest
thought

Fades soonest. Though each day we rise
With new resolve, yet ere the modest skies
Have cast aside their cloud-veils—floating caught
To hide their blushes when the smiling morn,
Had jocund kissed them—to the earth down
borne,
Resolve and dream have failed and come to
naught!

"Whence come," I said, "this gloomy doubt and
fear,

This dark misgiving, brooding o'er the mind?"
Just then there sounded through the silence clear
A linnet's note. I turned and looked behind,
And, like a deed of shame, my shadow lay,
Far-stretching, wan, and sombre, down the dell,
Gaunt and uncouth. Then, as the lightnings
play

From cloud to cloud, across my mind there fell
A burning thought, as meteor o'er the night:
"Were there no shadow, then there were no light."
These doubts are but the shades which all must
cast,

Who seek the Truth: but if thou look to Him,
The Endless Light, thy sullen doubtings dim
Behind thee lie, and all their terrors grim
No more appal. So shalt thou find at last
The long-sought peace; and when the night is
past

All earth-born shades shall melt and flee away
In the bright glory of the perfect Day!

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

— — — — —

ON BEING SHY.

ALL great literary men are shy. I am myself, though I am told it is hardly noticeable now.

I am glad it is not. It used to be extremely prominent at one time, and was the cause of much misery to myself, and discomfort to every one about me—my lady friends, especially, complained most bitterly against it.

A shy man's lot is not a happy one. The men dislike him, the women despise him, and he dislikes and despises himself. Use brings him no relief, and there is no cure for him except time; though I once came across a delicious receipt for overcoming the misfortune. It appeared among the "answers to correspondents" in a small, weekly

journal, and ran as follows—I have never forgotten it:—"Adopt an easy and pleasing manner, especially towards ladies."

Poor wretch! I can imagine the grin with which he must have read that advice. "Adopt an easy and pleasing manner, especially towards ladies," forsooth! Don't you adopt anything of the kind, my dear young shy friend. Your attempt to put on any other disposition than your own will infallibly result in your becoming ridiculously gushing and offensively familiar. Be your own natural self, and then you will only be thought to be surly and stupid.

The shy man does have some slight revenge upon society for the torture it inflicts upon him. He is able, to a certain extent, to communicate his misery. He frightens other people as much as they frighten him. He acts like a damper upon the whole room, and the most jovial spirits become, in his presence, depressed and nervous.

This is a good deal brought about by misunderstanding. Many people mistake the shy man's timidity for overbearing arrogance, and are awed and insulted by it. His awkwardness is resented as insolent carelessness, and, when terror-stricken at the first word addressed to him, the blood rushes to his head, and the power of speech completely fails him, he is regarded as an awful example of the evil effects of giving way to passion.

But, indeed, to be misunderstood is the shy man's fate on every occasion; and, whatever impression he endeavours to create, he is sure to convey its opposite. When he makes a joke, it is looked upon as a pretended relation of fact, and his want of veracity much condemned. His sarcasm is accepted as his literal opinion, and gains for him the reputation of being an ass; while if, on the other hand, wishing to ingratiate himself, he ventures upon a little bit of flattery, it is taken for satire, and he is hated ever afterwards.

These, and the rest of a shy man's troubles, are always very amusing to other people; and have afforded material for comic writing from time immemorial. But if we look a little deeper, we shall find there is a pathetic, one might almost say a tragic, side to the picture. A shy man means a lonely man—a man cut off from all companionship, all sociability. He moves about the world, but does not mix with it. Between him and his fellow-men, there runs ever an impassable barrier—a strong, invisible wall, that, trying in vain to scale, he but bruises himself against. He sees the pleasant faces, and hears the pleasant voices on the other side, but he cannot stretch his hand across to grasp another hand. He stands watching the merry groups, and he longs to speak, and to claim kindred with them. But they pass him by, chatting gaily to one another, and he cannot stay them. He tries to reach them but his prison walls move with him, and hem him in on every side. In the busy street, in the crowded room, in the grind of work, in the whirl of pleasure, amidst the many or amidst the few; wherever men congregate together, wherever the music of human speech is heard, and human thought is flashed from human eyes, there, shunned and solitary, the shy man stands apart, like a leper. His soul is full of love and longing, but the world knows it not. The iron mask of shyness is riveted before his face, and the man beneath is never seen. Genial words and hearty greetings are ever rising to his lips, but

they die away in unheard whispers behind the steel clamps. His heart aches for the weary brother, but his sympathy is dumb. Contempt and indignation against wrong choke up his throat, and, finding no safety valve, when in passionate utterance they may burst forth, they only turn in again and harm him. All the hate, and scorn, and love of a deep nature, such as the shy man is ever cursed by, fester and corrupt within, instead of spending themselves abroad, and sour him into a misanthrope and cynic.

Yes, shy men, like ugly women, have a bad time of it in this world, to go through which with any comfort needs the hide of a rhinoceros. Thick skin is, indeed, our moral clothes, and without it, we are not fit to be seen about in civilized society. A poor gasping, blushing creature, with trembling knees and twitching hands, is a painful sight to every one, and if it cannot cure itself, the sooner it goes and hangs itself the better.

The disease can be cured. For the comfort of the shy, I can assure them of that from personal experience. I do not like speaking about myself, as may have been noticed, but in the cause of humanity I on this occasion will do so, and will confess that at one time I was, as the young man in the Bab Ballad says, "the shyest of the shy," and "whenever I was introduced to any pretty maid, my knees they knocked together just as if I was afraid." Now, I would—nay, *have*. On this very day before yesterday I did the deed. Alone and entirely by myself (as the schoolboy said in translating the *Bellum Gallicum*) did I beard a railway refreshment-room young lady in her own lair. I rebuked her in terms of mingled bitterness and sorrow for her callousness and want of condescension. I insisted, courteously but firmly, on being accorded that deference and attention that was the right of the travelling Briton; and, at the end, *I looked her full in the face*. Need I say more.

True, that immediately after doing so, I left the room with what may possibly have appeared to be precipitation, and without waiting for any refreshment. But that was because I had changed my mind, not because I was frightened, you understand.

One consolation that shy folk can take unto themselves is that shyness is certainly no sign of stupidity. It is easy enough for bullheaded clowns to sneer at nerves, but the highest natures are not necessarily those containing the greatest amount of moral brass. The horse is not an inferior animal to the cock-sparrow, nor the antelope to the pig. Shyness simply means extreme sensibility, and has nothing whatever to do with self-consciousness or with conceit, though its relationship to both is continually insisted upon by the poll-parrot school of philosophy.

Conceit, indeed, is the quickest cure for it. When it once begins to dawn upon you that you are a good deal cleverer than any one else in this world, bashfulness becomes shocked, and leaves you. When you can look round a roomful of people, and feel that each one is a mere child in intellect compared with yourself, you feel no more shy of them than you would of a select company of magpies or ourang-outangs.

Conceit is the finest armour that a man can wear. Upon its smooth, impenetrable surface, the puny dagger-thrusts of spite and envy glance harm-

lessly aside. Without that breast-plate, the sword of talent cannot force its way through the battle of life, for blows have to be borne as well as dealt. I do not, of course, speak of the conceit that displays itself in an elevated nose and a falsetto voice. That is not real conceit, that is only playing at being conceited; like children play at being kings and queens, and go strutting about with feathers and long trains. Genuine conceit does not make a man objectionable. On the contrary, it tends to make him genial, kind-hearted, and simple. He has no need of affectation, he is far too well satisfied with his own character; and his pride is too deep-seated to appear at all on the outside. Careless alike of praise or blame, he can afford to be truthful. Too far, in fancy, above the rest of mankind to trouble about their petty distinctions, he is equally at home with duke or costermonger. And, valuing no one's standard but his own, he is never tempted to practise that miserable pretence that less self-reliant people offer up as an hourly sacrifice to the God of their neighbours' opinion.

The shy man, on the other hand, is humble—modest of his own judgment, and over-anxious concerning that of others. But this, in the case of a young man, is surely right enough. His character is unformed. It is slowly evolving itself out of a chaos of doubt and disbelief. Before the growing insight and experience, the diffidence recedes. A man rarely carries his shyness past the hobbled-hoy period. Even if his own inward strength does not throw it off, the rubbings of the world generally smooth it down. You scarcely ever meet a really shy man—except in novels or on the stage, where, by-the-by, he is much admired, especially by the women.

There, in that supernatural land, he appears as a fair-haired and saint-like young man—fair hair and goodness always go together on the stage. No respectable audience would believe in one without the other. I knew an actor who mislaid his wig once, and had to rush on to play the hero in his own hair, which was jet black, and the gallery howled at all his noble sentiments under the impression that he was the villain. He—the shy young man—loves the heroine, oh so devotedly (but only in asides, for he dare not tell her of it), and he is so noble and unselfish, and speaks in such a low voice, and is so good to his mother; and the bad people in the play, they laugh at him, and jeer at him, but he takes it all so gently, and, in the end, it transpires that he is such a clever man, though nobody knew it, and then the heroine tells him she loves him, and he is so surprised, and oh, so happy! and everybody loves him, and asks him to forgive them, which he does in a few well-chosen and sarcastic words, and blesses them; and he seems to have generally such a good time of it that all the young fellows who are not shy long to be shy. But the really shy man knows better. He knows that it is not quite so pleasant in reality. He is not quite so interesting there as in the fiction. He is a little more clumsy and stupid, and a little less devoted and gentle, and his hair is much darker, which, taken altogether, considerably alters the aspect of the case.

The point where he does resemble his ideal is in his faithfulness. I am fully prepared to allow the shy young man that virtue: he is constant in his love. But the reason is not far to seek. The

fact is it exhausts all his stock of courage to look one woman in the face, and it would be simply impossible for him to go through the ordeal with a second. He stands in far too much dread of the whole female sex to want to go gadding about with many of them. One is quite enough for him.

Now it is different with the young man who is not shy. He has temptations which his bashful brother never encounters. He looks around, and everywhere sees roguish eyes and laughing lips. What more natural than that amidst so many roguish eyes and laughing lips he should get confused, and forgetting for the moment which particular pair of roguish eyes and laughing lips it is that he belongs to, goes off making love to the wrong set. The shy man, who never looks at anything but his own boots, sees not, and is not tempted. Happy shy man!

Not but what the shy man himself would much rather not be happy in that way. He longs to "go it" with the others, and curses himself every day for not being able to. He will, now and again, screwing up his courage by a tremendous effort, plunge into roguishness. But it is always a terrible fiasco, and after one or two feeble flounders, he crawls out again, limp and pitiable.

I say "pitiable," though I am afraid he never is pitied. There are certain misfortunes which, while inflicting a vast amount of suffering upon their victims, gain for them no sympathy. Losing an umbrella, falling in love, toothache, black eyes, and having your hat sat upon, may be mentioned as a few examples, but the chief of them all is shyness. The shy man is regarded as an animate joke. His tortures are the sport of the drawing-room arena, and are pointed out and discussed with much gusto.

"Look," cry his tittering audience to each other, "he's blushing!"

"Just watch his legs," says one.

"Do you notice how he is sitting?" adds another; "right on the edge of the chair."

"Seems to have plenty of colour," sneers a military-looking gentleman.

"Pity he's got so many hands," murmurs an elderly lady, with her own calmly folded on her lap. "They quite confuse him."

"A yard or two off his feet wouldn't be a disadvantage," chimes in the comic man, "especially as he seems so anxious to hide them."

And then another suggests that with such a voice he ought to have been a sea captain. Some draw attention to the desperate way in which he is grasping his hat. Some comment upon his limited powers of conversation. Others remark upon the troublesome nature of his cough. And so on, unto his peculiarities and the company are both thoroughly exhausted.

His friends and relations make matters still more unpleasant for the poor boy (friends and relations are privileged to be more disagreeable than other people). Not content with making fun of him amongst themselves, they insist on his seeing the joke. They mimic and caricature him for his own edification. One, pretending to imitate him, goes outside, and comes in again in a ludicrously nervous manner, explaining to him afterwards that that is the way he—meaning the shy fellow—walks into a room; or, turning to him with, "This is the way you shake hands," proceeds to go through a comic pantomime with the

rest of the room, taking hold of every one's hand as if it were a hot plate, and flabbily dropping it again. And then they ask him *why* he blushes, and *why* he stammers, and *why* he always speaks in an almost inaudible tone, as if they thought he did it on purpose. Then one of them, sticking out his chest, and strutting about the room like a pouter-pigeon, suggests quite seriously that that is the style he should adopt. The old man slaps him on the back, and says, "Be bold, my boy. Don't be afraid of any one." The mother says, "Never do anything that you need be ashamed of, Algernon, and then you never need be ashamed of anything you do," and, beaming mildly at him, seems surprised at the clearness of her own logic. The boys tell him that he's "worse than a girl," and the girls repudiate the implied slur upon their sex by indignantly exclaiming that they are sure no girl would be half as bad.

They are quite right; no girl would be. There is no such thing as a shy woman, or, at all events, I have never come across one, and until I do I shall not believe in them. I know that the generally accepted belief is quite the reverse. All women are supposed to be like timid, startled fawns, blushing and casting down their gentle eyes when looked at, and running away when spoken to; while we men are supposed to be a bold and rollicky lot, and the poor, dear little women admire us for it, but are terribly afraid of us. It is a pretty theory, but, like most generally accepted theories, mere nonsense. The girl of twelve is self-contained, and as cool as the proverbial cucumber, while her brother of twenty stammers and stutters by her side. A woman will enter a concert-room late, interrupt the performance, and disturb the whole audience without moving a hair, while her husband follows her, a crushed heap of apologetic misery.

The superior nerve of women in all matters connected with love, from the casting of the first sheep's eye down to the end of the honeymoon, is too well acknowledged to need comment. Nor is the example a fair one to cite in the present instance, the positions not being equally balanced. Love is woman's business, and in "business" we lay aside our natural weaknesses—the shyest man I ever knew was a photographic tout.

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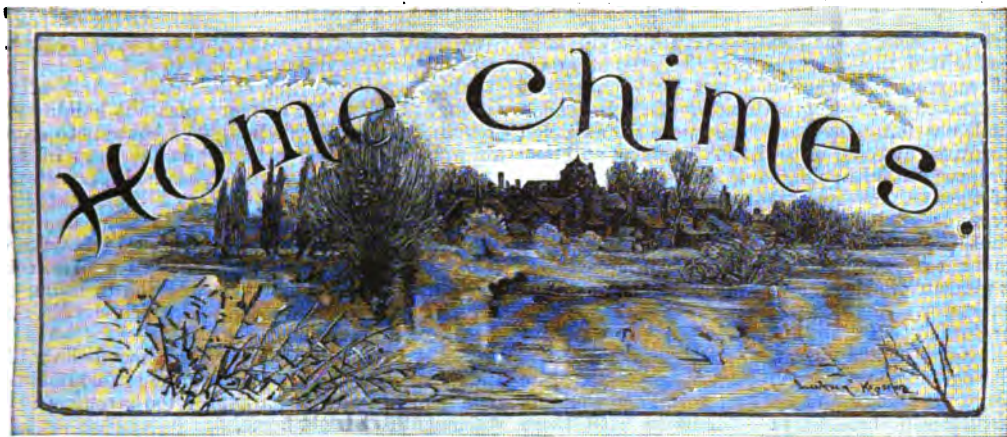
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,
Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

PART I.

LESS THAN FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSEHOLD AT THE STEPPING STONES.

AGNES LEAKE'S departure for Australia created much interest in the little world which had known her from a child. Even the marriage of her sister Kate failed to be regarded as a more considerable event. Agnes had always been a pretty, gentle creature, full of fastidious sensibilities, and noticeable for her refined taste. Her brothers and sisters had spoilt her; her friends had honoured her; she was young enough and sweet enough to be pardoned some caprices, and to be indulged in many innocent fancies. She had been protected from the roughnesses of life, and her natural shrinking from unpleasant experiences had, therefore, rather increased than diminished as she developed from childhood to delicate girlhood. She was not clever, but she had various pleasant accomplishments, a sweet voice, a soft touch, and a gently entreating manner. More than one man had admired her, perhaps beyond her deserts; but, in spite of her apparent softness and yielding tenderness, her affections were not readily gained. So at least it seemed, when she refused, one after the other, four suitors, whose advances were favoured by her family.

It is true that her sisters were consoled in each case by feeling that Agnes might do better. Her first lover was a young man only a couple of years

older than herself, who fell in love with her girlish prettiness; and her sister Susie remarked that, if Agnes had accepted him, they would have been, after all, only a couple of children together. Then there was a middle-aged suitor, old enough to be her father, who would have been admirably adapted to guide and cherish her youthful inexperience. But—in the light of her rejection of this marriage—it was seen by her friends to have threatened a serious sacrifice of that gaiety to which her age entitled her.

When a London barrister, a friend of her brother's, offered her, on the other hand, a somewhat brilliant social position, it was readily perceived—by means of her reluctance to avail herself of this opportunity—that a life of festivity and perpetual entertainment was unsuited to her domestic habits.

The unexpected surrender to her sweetness of a neighbouring vicar, who was neither too old nor too young, too rich nor too poor, seemed to leave at last no proper pretext for Agnes Leake's refusal to marry; but she discovered that he was "too good;" she was as much dismayed and horrified at his proposal as if the pulpit itself, in which she had often heard him preach, had made her an offer of marriage. Then her sisters became at once aware that he was very strict in his views, and that much visiting of poor parishioners, and attendance on early services, would be injurious to Agnes. As on other occasions, they perceived that a happy instinct had saved her from accepting a position in which she would ultimately suffer, and they were glad to keep her at home a little longer.

It was somewhat remarkable that so many men should place themselves at the disposal of this one girl, whose prettiness was of no brilliant sort; but, while her manners were sweet enough to suggest an easy conquest of her affections, her character was passive enough for most men to fit their own ideal upon, and to see it as they would like it to be. It is probable that none of them,

except, perhaps, the youngest of all, would have committed themselves so easily to a definite offer of marriage, if they had not felt a pleasant assurance of meeting with no obstacle beyond a little charming shyness. They were all as much surprised at being refused as Agnes was at being proposed to, although, on thinking it over, none of them could remember what had been the grounds of his over-confidence. The fact was that the negative sweetness of Agnes Leake's manner was as favourable to the encouragement of a pleasant illusion, as was the passiveness of her character. She was without ardent imagination or intellectual ambition. Her affection was of a clinging, demanding sort—not passionate, not daring, not speculative, nor venturesome. She loved the things and persons to whom she was accustomed, because in intercourse with these there was no fear of unpleasant surprises. She was quite happy at home, and shrank from the thought of a new start in life, which would compel her to a readjustment of her habits and also of her emotions. She was not yet old enough to have experienced any dropping away of early ties; therefore she had no idea of the necessity of forming new ones to replace them.

She had two brothers and four sisters, all older than herself. Susie, the eldest of the sisters, had been for many years a careful mother to the others; Anna and Ellen represented the serious element in the family, intellectual and religious, but not very deeply so; while Kate and Agnes were the household darlings, and close companions of one another.

When Agnes was nineteen, Kate astonished her by accepting the proposal of Mr. John Langford (commonly called "Jack"), and promising to go to Australia as his wife. Kate was considered by her friends more brilliant and accomplished than Agnes, but her beauty had failed to procure for her in so high a degree that accepted social diploma of womanly success—the admiration of many men. Perhaps Agnes was at first disappointed to find that her favourite sister accepted so readily the opportunity of changing her name and home; but she soon learnt to look upon the engagement as a pleasant experience, novel and enjoyable in its reflected interest.

A separation from Kate would have been undoubtedly painful to her, but it was arranged that she should accompany the young couple to Australia, and spend a year with them there. Susie hoped that this interval of absence and change would break the keenness of the parting between the two sisters, and that Agnes would return home less wedded to old circumstances, and not so firmly resolved against any step which must take her permanently into a new home and a new circle.

Meanwhile, strange as it might seem, Agnes showed little reluctance to leave England in this way. The change which had seemed wholly beyond her power to accept, when it was offered in the form of marriage to herself, came as a natural thing to her when it was a consequence of the marriage of Kate. Kate was bright, brave, and full of spirit; Agnes watched her and listened to her with a pleasant admiration as the preparations for departure went forward. For Agnes seemed to enjoy the idea of a new household, where Kate—her companion and equal—would be

the head, and even looked forward with pleasure to the long voyage she was to take under the sheltering wing of her sister. The whole affair brought back to her memory pleasant holidays of childhood, when Susie had given consent to some unwontedly bold undertaking on the part of the two youngest sisters, and Agnes had followed the daring inspirations of Kate, and been protected by her superior spirit. Now, as then, she was still to be the "little one," having no importance as an actor, but every importance as a person to be taken care of; and this was the position to which she was accustomed, and which she did not care to change for any other.

Nevertheless, her elder sisters hoped that this new experience would give her the self-confidence she required, and wean her of too strong an attachment to her old home.

Marriage, they all thought, would be "so suitable" for Agnes. Miss Leake—Susie—thought so with especial decision; though marriage had never entered into her ideas as something desirable for herself. She was happily occupied in the management of a household, and in filling the important position of elder sister to a large family. The house which she occupied with her sisters was her own, her income was a little larger than theirs; therefore she had that power of being generous, and that right to decide which add so much to the natural influence of seniority. The same absorption in family affection which rendered Agnes indifferent to her suitors, had also kept Miss Leake from wandering into any of those by-paths of sympathy and friendship which often lead to matrimony. But her family affection was of the kind which is occupied in giving, instead of that which is satisfied in receiving. In spite of handsome looks and pleasant manners, she had attracted no man sufficiently to encourage him to attempt to overcome her evident indifference. A capable woman who has found her destiny and is wholly satisfied with it, is ordinarily—except in her earliest youth—as safe from the attentions of lovers as a happily married wife. There is something in the perpetual pre-occupation of her mind in her chosen duties, something also in the non-expectation of her manners which effectually exclude the possibility of those sympathetic awakenings to an interest in another life, which—oftener than mere grace and beauty—make the beginning of passionate attachments. A capable woman not completely occupied by her chosen life is in a different position; but Miss Leake had always been actively and evidently content in her own little circle. One member of it after another was continually requiring her kind attention, her thoughtful care, her wise advice. She was always arranging, working, scheming, for the welfare of her younger sisters; and if some suitor, spurred by his appreciation of her devotion to her family, had suggested that she should transfer that devotion to himself, she would have listened with mere wonder and indignation at his presumption.

But her plans for her sisters were not laid out on the pattern of her own life. It was as natural for her to hope for new homes and new interests on their behalf as it would have been to reject them on her own. It had been an unspoken disappointment to her that Anna and Ellen remained so long under her roof. Ellen had indeed once been weak enough to receive with too much encouragement

the attentions of a poor curate, but that affair had happily, under the chilling discountenance of Miss Leake herself, come to nothing. It was a little provoking that no more eligible suitor had "come forward" on behalf of either of the two sisters next to herself in age. They were not very important personages in themselves; she would have liked to see them shining in reflected importance as heads of prosperous households. Kate's engagement was therefore an unmitigated satisfaction to her; for Mr. Langford's family was good, and his means were good, although he was a younger son. She did not waste regrets over Kate's departure for Australia; a dozen years abroad would do the girl no harm, she thought; and she well knew that all the members of her family could not find prosperous settlements within the narrow range of Elmdale. Of her two brothers the elder already practised in London as a barrister, the younger had gone out to India a couple of years ago. It was an actual satisfaction to Miss Leake to send branches of her household to take root abroad and return from time to time to the quiet valley where she planned their lives, and from which she watched their careers. Kate was, she considered, just the girl for a colonist, full of the cheerful enjoyment of youth, and eager to find pleasure in every new experience. She had no doubts or fears on her behalf.

The season in Elmdale which preceded Kate's marriage was a bright and happy one. The household at "The Stepping Stones," as Miss Leake's pretty residence was called, was full of gaiety and cheerful preparations. The dull monotony of ordinary existence in the valley was overcome by the sunshine of happy circumstances. The coming and going of the future bridegroom, the visits of friends, and all the arrangements and preparations in which Miss Leake delighted, filled the last months with interest and pleasure.

Miss Leake revelled in an atmosphere of social prosperity. She was pleased (and secretly proud) that Kate's wedding should come at the right time and in the right way. She always felt herself responsible to the world for what occurred in her household; all events there should be seasonable and well-ripened fruit; bearing signs of inward health and outward sunshine, having the fine bloom as well as the sweet flavour which testified that they were fruits of a good stock. Marriage should come at a suitable age to those who were destined for it, just as preserving or house-cleaning should be done in the proper season. The outward fitness of things was considered important by Miss Leake, and consoled her sometimes for much inward inconvenience. Better to be uncomfortable privately than to apologize publicly: such was her secret theory. Therefore everything was properly ordered in her household and properly arranged in her sisters' education.

She had secured for them "the best instruction" to a moderate extent. They were not permitted to be altogether ignorant of anything that might be spoken of or written about in polite society. Their knowledge was undoubtedly superficial, and their accomplishments did not go far in any direction; but there was nothing Miss Leake desired less than to make them prodigies. She wished them to move easily and successfully in life, as she conceived it, and she secured to them what she regarded as the necessary instruction to

this end. They were human pegs carefully rounded to fit without difficulty into comfortable holes, and—having rounded the pegs—she was glad that they should justify her forethought by slipping without difficulty into the places open to them.

She did not admire clever girls, and was never enthusiastic in her praise of good ones; those at least who were specially marked out as such by their parochial visitations and love of week-day services. She never spoke openly against these devotees; her disapprobation took the form of compassion in public; for religion was one of her own chief supports, both socially and mentally, but then she always kept it, like everything else, "in its proper place." She was inclined to insinuate that any one who made a very visible application of herself to heavenly things must be drawn thereto by a lack of earthly prosperity. It had never been necessary for herself—or any member of her family—to make an interest in her life out of ordinances and ceremonials; the proper conduct of her affairs, the attention to her "daily duties" had been sufficient.

"Poor thing," she would say of a girl who distributed tracts too freely; "she has been very unfortunate. No doubt it occupies her mind." Or she would remark of another whose attendance at all the church services was becoming too prominent: "Poor girl! Yes. She has such bad health; all her brothers had."

Her sister Anna was a little too clever for her taste, for she had shown some slight inclination to study after leaving school. Her sister Ellen had also disappointed her a little. She had exhibited an early tendency to that superlative goodness which may be better developed in later life, when it has been clearly proved that no other course is to be followed—no other *duty*, Miss Leake would have said. She had no good opinion of those who sought to be amateurs in social life, picking their own work, and addicted to over much charity when they ought to have been making themselves useful in their own homes. She was a great supporter and admirer of her vicar, but she had such strong opinions on this and similar points, that she was frequently a thorn in his side. She would not permit a word to be said against his sermons by any member of her household; but she would not yield a jot to his opinion on any affair of her own.

Kate was allowed to teach in the Sunday school, but Agnes was pronounced "not strong enough;" and Kate's Sunday duties were not permitted to interfere with the length of any visit or to be fulfilled at any risk. A wet day, or scarlet fever in the village, left the vicar to dispose of her class as he could. Also, Miss Leake subscribed very willingly to refuges for the destitute and reformatories for the criminal classes; but she distinctly declined to give a supper to any ragged boys in her kitchen, or to attempt the conversion of any pilfering girl into a good servant. She had a strong fund of "common sense," which guided her safely through many difficulties without providing her with any good reason for the course she followed; and she had a certain mental acuteness, which kept her alive to the state of polite taste and opinion on matters which she had never studied deeply herself. She was aware of the value of her own sound sense, and careful not to

wander far into the dangerous regions of argument. She relied upon character and conduct as the weights to give value to her spoken opinion; and in her own circle she was regarded as a very great authority.

She was an authority which her younger sisters had never questioned. All her arrangements concerning them were so obviously for their own benefit, that it would have been unreasonable to receive them with any demur. She was even over-indulgent to the two younger ones, having learnt to regard their happiness and comfort as of absolute and not relative value. She seemed to forget that they had any duty in the world except to make the very best of it and to find as much enjoyment there as possible. When they were emancipated from study, she supplied them with pleasure as diligently as she had once supplied them with tasks, and was anxious that they should apply themselves as heartily to the one as they had done to the other. She had indeed the same healthy delight in seeing young people happy that she had in seeing trees bloom or downy chickens plume themselves in the sunshine; and she was a little inclined to forget, now that the passage of years had taken her from the regions of girlhood, that even those happy years had their own responsibilities, and could not be accepted as mere opportunities of enjoyment.

She was very proud of Kate, who was full of a bright talent which it would be unkind to call superficial, because it was genuine and unaffected as far as it went. Miss Leake classed her as "brilliant," in speaking of her to her friends, and took care that her fine voice should be well trained, and her tall young figure handsomely dressed.

But she was fondest of Agnes, the "home-bird," the child who never had an opinion of her own, nor a desire which it would be difficult to gratify. Kate sometimes made a light struggle over a minor point, such as what dress she ought to wear on a particular occasion, for she had brought back new ideas from her boarding-school; but Agnes took all directions sweetly, and would almost have given up the chance of an entertainment if she had been compelled to decide what dress she must go in.

Was it wonderful then that Miss Leake loved her best, and parted from her most reluctantly, though it was for two years only?

CHAPTER II.

TWO SISTERS.

AGNES decided that it was a delightful thing to be a bridesmaid. She liked the secondary importance which it gave to her, the share in the glory of the occasion without responsibility or thrilling experiences. She didn't want to be thrilled, but only to be mildly and gently stimulated, to have a minor part in a great performance, and to peep round the principal personage at the admiring spectators. And Kate was so admirably fitted to be a principal! It was wonderful, beautiful, to look at her and to think of the plunge into life that she was about to take.

It was pleasant also to make acquaintance with the new brother-in-law, and to admire the degree

to which Kate—who, after all, knew him so very little—was at her ease with him.

He was the son of an old friend who lived in Elmdale, and he had become known to the girls within the last few months while on a visit to his parents.

The situation was to Agnes very interesting, slightly amusing, and altogether incredible. How *could* Kate call this stranger "Jack," and agree to go with him to the other end of the world? The proceeding entertained her, because she was not involved in the risks of it, and could always come home if she didn't like her life abroad. She was not much given to laughter, but she did laugh softly from time to time when she looked at her sister and said, "Why, Kate, you can't be married; you're just *Kats*."

On account of a supposed delicacy of health, which had never however resulted in any serious illness, Agnes had been spared the hardening and informing experience of a boarding-school; but Kate had enjoyed the advantages and disadvantages of one for more than a year. She had consoorted with other girls of her own age, massed together under restrictive conditions highly incitant to every sort of innocent foolishness and indiscretion. Marriage was not to her that wonderful, incomprehensible, out-of-the-way thing that it seemed to Agnes. She had seen it looked forward to as promotion; she had heard it treated as a jest.

"How foolish you are!" she said to Agnes, "every one gets married; it is far odder *not* to do. Would you be an old maid?"

"Why not?" answered Agnes. "Susie is, I suppose."

"But every one is not like Susie. All women have not her character, nor position. It would be much better if Anna and Ellen were married; and I know that is Susie's opinion."

"Do you think so?" asked Agnes, in amazement. Until Kate had achieved the position of an engaged young woman, she had never thus expressed herself.

"I am sure of it. All the girls at school thought it *dreadful* to be an old maid."

"But you said they were silly, most of them."

"So they were. But every one thinks the same. Don't you notice how Robert, every time he comes from London, says 'Let me see, Anna, how old are you?' That's what he means, of course."

"Is it indeed? and do you think, Kate," Agnes went on, with awe and wonder in her voice, "*they would have liked it themselves?*"

"Of course they would. You don't expect them to say so. How can they like, at their age, having no house of their own, no servant—no anything?" The last item was probably meant to stand for Jack.

"But why should they? I don't see it;" said Agnes. "A house is a trouble, and so are servants."

"Pooh!" said Kate.

"Then why didn't they?" asked Agnes, apparently convinced by the last argument.

"Yes, why?" repeated Kate, twisting her engagement ring round her finger, with a little air of superiority. "Well, you know I think they might have done, if they had been sensible. They could not have found anyone like Jack, of course; that wasn't to be expected. Why did Anna

poke into all those foolish books? and Ellen into all those cottages? Making people paupers, as Susie says. And then there was the *curate*”—with an accent of supreme contempt very becoming in a young lady about to be married to Mr. Jack Langford—"I don't wonder Susie was vexed."

"The curate! and was she vexed?" asked Agnes, in some excitement. "You never told me about these things before."

"We were supposed not to know; and then it isn't nice to talk continually about getting married—like those foolish girls at school."

Agnes understood that a license was now permitted to Kate, which did not extend to herself; so she let the subject drop.

Kate was, at this period, highly satisfied with life. She was convinced that it contained everything necessary to happiness for persons who were not stupid. She herself was highly successful, so she considered, and it was the fault of other people if they were not so. Her prospects at the moment entirely satisfied her. She was very fond of Jack, and she was tired of Elmdale. She liked the idea of having a house of her own, and of giving orders to servants without considering whether they were strictly reasonable; she was also delighted to travel. She was not unwilling, too, to escape from the kindly supervision of Susie; and she did not consider herself appreciated in Elmdale. On the arrival of some one from the great world—for instance, Jack—her superiority had been at once discovered, and her proper place given to her. It was nice, too, to think that she might be pleasantly unreasonable to other people besides servants, that she could speak disrespectfully to Jack, and show a little temper at times, and yet that he seemed to like her all the better for it. Also she hoped to be able to spend a little money foolishly, to buy dresses that Susie never would have approved of, and to do as she liked generally.

And then to take Agnes under her matronly wing, and introduce her to the world—how pleasant that would be! It was pleasant already to see the flushed wonder of that sweet young timidity at the easy coolness with which she received Jack's devotion. To be bright, to be impetuous, to be impertinent—as only a young married woman in the first glow of happy importance can venture to be—this was pleasant to look forward to in the future, and to rehearse a little in the present. It would have lost some of its charm had the happy comedy been without a spectator from that past in which she had lived under Susie's jurisdiction; and what more desirable spectator could she have had than the wondering, sympathetic, admiring, submissive Agnes?

Therefore the marriage, and all its secondary results, were satisfactory to everybody concerned. The ceremony, when it took place, was pronounced brilliantly successful, and repaid Miss Leake for all the trouble and forethought which she had bestowed upon it.

The young couple went away for a brief wedding journey, and Agnes was left at home meanwhile with her elder sisters. But she had no time for overmuch thought of her own approaching departure. Her outfit had to be finished, and her boxes packed. Her gentle spirit was not insensible to the delight of the excessive attention which she received at this time, nor to the charms of

those superlatively pretty dresses which were being made for her in a profusion justifiable only in a case of marriage or "going abroad." Every one said that she looked so well in them: the servants especially, who obtained glimpses when she was being "tried on" (making errands into the room on purpose), pronounced her altogether lovely, and quite superior to the bride. For the beauty of Agnes was of the sort which always appeals most to the imaginations of those who work with their hands, and who believe that the special characteristics of a lady are, first, to have the right to do nothing, and, secondly, to use that right to the utmost. It was evident that Agnes never could be very useful, in any way, to anybody; she was too sensitive and helpless. Therefore she was all the more admirable as a pretty young lady, having a type of attractiveness which never could be rivalled by the most fascinating of housemaids or cooks.

In a fortnight Kate came home again. She was by no means subdued by her change of name and position. She made the most of her actual emancipation from the control of Susie, and adopted a pretty independence of manner, which charmed every one by its novelty, and seemed to fit excellently with the fresh bridal dresses which none expected to wear very well, or to last very long. She patronized Agnes, who was still in her old bondage, while she herself was absolutely at liberty; the possible subduing power of the future—namely, Jack—was only an eager servant still.

In the presence of her bright hopefulness even the parting could not be very sad. Agnes looked about her with bewilderment as the last kisses were given, for she could not realize that she was actually leaving her old home and protectors. She would have broken down into tears and sorrow if any one had given her encouragement, or set her the example. But no one did. Miss Leake had specially warned Anna and Ellen beforehand: "We must keep up for the sake of Agnes; poor child!"—and so no one wept or looked miserable.

Robert Leake accompanied the young people to Liverpool, and saw them on board. On the journey there he talked to his brother-in-law with matter-of-fact cheerfulness of the arrangements for the voyage. Kate put in a word now and then. She was in high spirits, and had no need to feign a composure she did not feel. Agnes stole many a wandering glance at her. Did she really feel like that? she wondered. Was it foolish to be sorry to go away? She tried to follow the example of the others, and not to imagine herself unhappy. They paid every attention to her comfort, and thought it best to ignore her probable feelings.

She marvelled nevertheless that Kate should show such an interest in the fittings of the ship, when there would be plenty of time to think of these afterwards. She often looked wistfully at Robert, and tried to invent new farewell messages to Susie, but couldn't think of any that were not foolish. When the last good-bye was said, and Kate declared brightly—

"I shall make Jack bring me home on a visit before long; and then I shall have lots to tell them at home; of course I haven't now." Agnes could find no message but this to send—

"Tell them I said good-bye many times over, and sent them my love, and thought of them all the way here."

"How foolish of you!" cried Kate; "what's the good of travelling if your mind is in Elmdale all the time?"

Nevertheless Robert forwarded both messages conscientiously, in a letter from London to "The Stepping Stones;" and they were thought of sadly afterwards, when it was known that Kate would never come back to Elmdale to tell the story of her married life, and no friend or sister hoped to see again the gentle face of Agnes in the home she had regretfully left.

(To be continued.)

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

BY PAUL BENISON.

IT was near an hour after midnight, but two men were still sitting conversing in the smoking-room of the Elephant club. This quiet and comfortable establishment was situated in a square at the West-end, and numbered, amongst its members, many who had been more or less connected with India or the colonies. The principal speaker was a man of forty or thereabouts, with good features, short dark hair just salted with grey, dark moustache and a strong active frame; the other, a large bony Scotchman, much older, with a bald head encircled by a fringe of sandy hair, light eyebrows, light eyelashes, thin light whiskers and a broad red face. The first was George Woodford and the second Dr. Maclachlan.

"You know, Mac," said George, "about the unfortunate circumstances in my family—everybody knows about them, of course; they were in the law reports. Well, well, I cannot be surprised at my father having been alienated from me, but I must do him the justice to say he did his best to provide for me. It was in the old days of the Directors, though their time was nearly up, and he got me a nomination and I went to Haileybury, and so in due course to India. I need not tell you that. He never wrote, and I had certainly been given to understand that no share in his possessions was destined for me. And when I came home on furlough eight or nine years ago, his natural son, Henry Delatouche, was living in the house with him. But the old man consented to see me, and I made up to him, and paid him a great deal of attention. He was afraid of Henry, but he told me privately one day that he should make another will. He should leave me a third of his money and the villa at Eastbourne; but the other two-thirds, and his place, Red Knights, and the Grosvenor Square house were to go to Henry. I swear he said all that. It was not for me to claim more; under the circumstances I was glad to get anything. However, since his death, no such will has been found. I don't like Henry—that is to say I have no deep affection for him. I think him a nasty, foreign, casino-haunting, curled son of a hussy; but I do not suppose he would do anything dishonourable. I don't suspect him of

having destroyed the will; it was probably put away out of his sight and has been lost. And by the earlier will, Henry is lord of all. However, the old butler, Andrews, who was attached to my mother, and says there were faults on both sides, has a recollection of being summoned to witness the signing of a will, and declares that poor Fred Sheridan was present too. And if Fred could be found, he doubtless might throw light on the whole thing. But then, *ubi gentium?* where is Fred? Night has closed around him!"

"Ay, ay," cried the doctor; "I mind me of his story. It was a bad business."

"The most amusing fellow out—handsome, gentlemanly, attractive: holding a good Government appointment too—bound to get on. Was there ever such a smash? Lost, forgotten, obliterated from the public memory. Too bad for a by-word—never mentioned."

"Hoot, man," said the other; "it is simple insanity prompts these things."

"Now you are an old chum," continued George, "and I will tell you a curious thing. Have you heard—that I am, perhaps, about to be married?"

"Yes, indeed, I was told, and a very aristocratic union, too."

"I don't say very much about it, because the match is not plain sailing yet. But listen: Lady Lucy Harley was engaged, when she was still in her teens, to this very Fred Sheridan, but her people, who are a grasping lot, broke it off. They say he never got over the disappointment. That was twelve years ago. Lady Lucy is now of an age more suitable for a man entering his ninth lustrum. But the family are giving me trouble,—declaring there is not money enough. Now is it not a coincidence that the man who aspired himself to the girl's love should be the person who alone perhaps in the world, could give her a helping hand to another husband?"

"Ay, you may say so, it is strange," remarked the doctor "but the world is full of strange things." He was thinking of his own private inclination to join his fate with that of the landlady at his lodgings; but even the last glass of whisky and water could not wring that secret from his cautious nature, and though the conversation lasted longer, he made no disclosures. At length the two friends rose; they had survived all but one old man, who was fast asleep in an arm-chair with a dead cigar in his hand, and his pocket-handkerchief spread over his face. They were both going in the direction of Jermyn Street, near which their respective apartments were situated, and so passed out into Bond Street, which was close at hand. They paced the deserted pavements; an occasional haughty policeman, or a cat—alone disturbed the solitude. Their own voices seemed to echo back from the houses opposite. They had got as far as a well-known hotel, when noiselessly advancing—evidently shod in india-rubber goloshes—a tall figure wrapt in a cloak, and with a sombrero hat drawn over his brow, passed, keeping close to the wall. He was near the turn into a side street, and was gone in an instant out of sight.

"I saw the face—I cannot be mistaken," muttered Woodford, and without explaining himself, he deserted his friend and went in pursuit.

The dark figure was soon caught up, but so perfectly silent were its steps, that there was some-

ting unearthly in the smooth rapid movement, which soon carried the walker into one of those covered passages a short cut occasionally involves. And in this secluded place Woodford ventured to pull the cloak, and say in an undertone, "Sheridan—I recognize you. I will respect your incognito, but for heaven's sake allow me a few minutes' conversation."

"You are mistaken," said the other, turning round calmly, "the name is Stokes."

"And mine—Woodford—George Woodford."

"It may be so. But there is some confusion. We are strangers."

"Fred, I will swear to your voice."

"You are under a delusion."

George was earnest, but the figure was obstinate, and it ended in the latter taking a counter from his pocket, and giving it to George—

"Call, if you will, at that address, and proof can be given you that you are in error."

And with this final discouragement, the figure hurried off, and was lost in the darkness. When Woodford arrived at his lodgings, he examined the counter, and found it an ivory one, with "Stokes, 50, Aylesbury Road," on the face, and on the reverse, "Admit the bearer."

The next day he started off, determined to follow the clue he had obtained; cabbed it as far as the Marble Arch, and then proceeded on foot to No. 50, Aylesbury Road, which was not at any great distance. The number was placed on a door just filling the space between two shops, and beneath was a plate, marked *Stokes, Miniature Painter*. On ringing, Woodford was admitted to a passage leading into a glass bureau, where were specimens of framed miniatures lying about, and a comely blonde woman sitting, working with her needle.

"Do you wish to see Mr. Stokes?"

"Yes, I suppose I do," replied George, taking the ivory counter from his pocket. "I want, at least, to see a tall man I met in the night."

"Oh," said the woman, changing colour a little, "you are calling on our tenant. I will go and inquire if you can be admitted." And smiling, she added "He uses our private view counters."

She was absent some minutes, and then said, as she entered—

"Please to step this way."

The blonde female passed before him through the back of the bureau, and down a covered glass and iron passage to a small pavilion. This stood in a garden, where was one fair-sized tree and many shrubs, all well washed and kept in health. And the wall at the bottom of the enclosure separated it from a disused graveyard, where there were several other trees in sight. The pavilion was two-storied, and had a projecting verandah, giving it rather an Oriental look, and in a room on the ground-floor a man sat painting. Rather a long-haired, untidy-looking fellow, but he rose very civilly as Woodford approached, and led the way upstairs to a door at which he knocked.

The figure of the previous night responded to the summons, but dressed very plainly in a velvetene coat and shepherd-plaid trousers; not devoid, however, of that nameless distinction which enables some people to look becoming and attractive even in the simplest attire.

The room was prettily adorned with works of art; a piano stood on one side, and there were several comfortable arm-chairs available.

Sheridan no longer attempted subterfuge. He quietly said—

"How are you, George? We have not met for a long time. I only walk at midnight. I see no one scarcely now."

"I would not have intruded on your seclusion, had it not been for an important matter, in which you alone can assist me."

Woodford then explained how his expectations had been disappointed, how his father had certainly led him to believe that some portion of the property would be bequeathed to himself, and how the old merchant had distinctly indicated his intention of writing a second will. Could Sheridan throw any light on the point, whether such a document had or had not been executed?

"I remember perfectly," said the other, "that your father mentioned to me that he had determined that you would succeed to a portion of his wealth. And I can recall an evening when I was sitting with him in his library, and he rang for Andrews, saying he would serve for the second witness, and in our presence he signed a document. It was a printed form, and he had clearly, but in few words, made a redistribution of his property—the bulk to Mr. Delatouche, but a certain portion to yourself. He did not wish Mr. Delatouche to know of it, and he said he would put the will by in a place for the present, of which some little catch-word would remind him. I remember at the time thinking there was some ingenuity in this artifice to prevent mislaying it, but for the life of me I could not tell you anything further. Your father very possibly moved it afterwards to some fitter place. At any rate, I can say no more."

Woodford urged most earnestly that he should visit the library, in the hope that the sight of the room might aid him to recollect where the old merchant had placed the document. Henry Delatouche and his wife were away, and the house entirely in charge of Andrews. Access could be easily obtained. Sheridan might be taken at night, and no one would be in the least the wiser.

But Sheridan was very unwilling to accede to this request; pleaded his hermit habits; urged that he was completely dead to London life; that his career in society had ended and he could not visit, without distressing emotion, a scene where he had once spent happy days. He displayed all the earnest obstinacy which a solitary life engenders: the nerves rendering any new departure alarming and irksome. But Woodford was determined to play a bold game; he would run the risk of exciting feelings of jealousy and rancour. He said straight out, abruptly:

"Sheridan, you remember Lady Lucy Harley?"

The poor man's countenance was transfigured with pain for a moment.

"Remember her?" he cried, "that I should ever be asked such a question!"

"She was sincerely attached to another," said Woodford, scarcely able to enunciate, "but the fates forbade, and now she is going—to marry me."

There was perfect silence; a little French clock on the chimney-piece gently tinkled the passing quarter.

At length Sheridan got up, and with tears no longer to be repressed, took Woodford's hand.

"You are worthy of her, and may heaven bless you both for her sake."

George then explained further how, through the rapacity of her relations, great difficulties were being raised on the score of paucity of money, and if, therefore, he himself were entitled to a portion of his father's wealth, it was urgent he should be certified of it.

Sheridan was no longer recusant.

"For old days," he said, "I will make an effort. It is just possible my memory may be refreshed by the features of the very spot, where your father mentioned how he should remember the place in which he had put the document. But even then he may have moved it—a thousand things may have happened—yet, never mind—I will go."

"You are placing me under a great obligation, Fred," cried Woodford.

"For one night only I will return into former scenes," Sheridan said. "I will dine with you, and afterwards visit your father's house."

The difficulties of the plan were discussed, and at last it was settled that the dinner should be somewhere in the city—where Sheridan was not likely to be recognized—and that all transits should be effected in a carriage. Andrews was communicated with, and promised to be quite ready to receive his two visitors, about ten at night. On his walk home, as he thought of the dinner part of the arrangement, George asked himself: Can I sit at the table with this man? No crime had been committed at which human nature revolts, though the offence was of a character society could not overlook. And then the very ostracism had afforded ample time for repentance; and the place, it might be hoped, had been sought bitterly, and with tears—and if God could forgive, could not he?

An evening or two afterwards, as arranged by letter, George drove in a comfortable roomy closed carriage, drawn by a pair of horses, and with a hired footman in attendance—to No. 50 Aylesbury Road. Shortly after the bell was rung, a dark figure appeared in cloak and slouched hat, but when, once in the vehicle, those equipments were stripped off, and Sheridan appeared as the inimitable Fred, in evening costume. There was doubtless something out of mode in the cut of his clothes, but they had once been superbly made, and the Gibbs the least thought on one side, and the white zinnia of the autumn season resting on its fern leaves, recalled the familiar form that had stood up in the opera stalls, and returned the bright looks from many of the encircling boxes. The restaurant in Fleet Street could, of course, in some respects, only offer an adumbration of a club dinner; but viands and wines were respectable; and as the meal was partaken of, at Fred's particular request, in the public room, some curiosity was excited as to who the two could be. As they drove afterwards along the crowded and brilliantly lighted thoroughfares to Grosvenor Square, Sheridan watched the passers-by with the greatest interest, and lightly touched on any peculiarities observed, with much of his former good-tempered wit. They were admitted to the old merchant's house by Andrews, and the unwonted visitant seemed touched by the remembered place, and yet more by the respect paid him by the kind-hearted butler, who made no difference in his demeanour from the old days. There was a solitary lamp on the

stairs; but when the boudoir next to the library was reached it was found completely illuminated and a sparkling little fire burning, and the library was similarly as bright and cheerful as possible. Andrews had provided coffee; and after the two intruding guests had lit cigarettes, they passed into the library. Andrews was summoned to aid, and the old grey-headed fellow seemed quite excited.

"Let us recall the circumstances," said Sheridan. "Mr. Woodford, your father, George, was of course in the arm-chair by that corner, and the will was ready in this drawer of the table, and we signed here on the table itself. And your father said 'I don't want Mr. Delatouche to know of this: it must be put aside for a time,' and then—where on earth did he place it? and what was the catchword he meant to remember the hiding-place by? Forgotten! I could not tell you for a thousand pounds."

"I do not remember any catchword," said the butler; "but I have a hazy sort of idea he slipped it into a book."

"Invaluable Andrews!" cried Fred, "that hint is worth gold. Yes, yes, there *was* a book. Could it have been a Testament recalling the idea of *testament*? No, that was not it. Let us light these hand candlesticks on the mantel-piece, and look at the backs of books."

This was done and George and Sheridan examined some of the higher shelves, whilst the butler put on his spectacles and spelt out the gilt letters close at hand. Some minutes went by in silence, when Fred suddenly called out "Eureka, Eureka." He was standing on a small set of steps, but he jumped down, with a volume in his hand—and as he opened it to show the full title abridged on the back, a folded paper fell out.

The book was marked outside "The Freedom of the Will," and was indeed the celebrated treatise by the American metaphysician, Jonathan Edwards; and sure enough, still undisturbed, as when the testator had placed it there, was the document securing to George a portion of the property. The old man had strictly kept his word: a third of the money and the house at Eastbourne were left to his legitimate son. Woodford was of course greatly excited, and anxious to get away, but Sheridan lingered. "It is for this night only," he murmured. They re-entered the boudoir. George sat down to examine the will more closely, the other opened the piano.

He was very musical, and sang charmingly. First he played the *Wein, Weib und Gesang* waltz, and then he tried the famous tenor air in "Martha"—*Mappari*; but towards the end his voice faltered, and he rather abruptly closed the instrument. Then he came gently up to his companion, still absorbed, and said—

"Have you a photograph?"

George had a coloured one of Lady Lucy in his pocket-book, and was glad to show it.

Sheridan stood by the fire gazing at it, then returned it, and said—

"Come away; it is all over."

They returned to No. 50, Aylesbury Road, and Fred waved his farewell from the door, amidst his friend's reiterated thanks. Woodford dismissed the carriage in St. James' Street, and hastening to old MacLachlan's lodgings, heard from the landlady that the doctor was in bed.

"I must awake him; I have news," cried George, and rushed up into his chamber.

The sleeper had a night-cap pulled quite over his ears, and sat up bewildered with the sudden disturbance.

"Hoot, man! is the house a-fire?" said he; but as he gradually understood the intelligence, he was sincerely delighted at the discovery.

When exclamations had exhausted themselves, the old boy remarked drily enough—

"It's well you waked me. I was dreaming I was to be married myself."

It turned out in the end that Henry Delatouche became amenable to amicable arrangements, and no law proceedings were necessary.

When matters were becoming very bright, George felt drawn to call again at No. 50, and see if he could do anything for one who had so benefited him.

He was admitted to the glass bureau. Mrs. Stokes was sitting there amongst the miniatures. George asked for his friend.

"Ah! he has left us," she cried; "and very sorry we were to lose him. Whatever may have happened in other days, he was always kindly and pleasant when here. His habits were peculiar, but that was his look out; he was good to us."

"Has he taken new lodgings?"

The woman smiled peculiarly.

"No, sir; not exactly that. He has become a lay-brother, and is with the Franciscans out Stratford way."

PASTEL:

A STUDY IN MONOCHROME.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON.

Author of "Meadow Sweet," &c.

CHAPTER VII.

"I CANNOT TELL HER."

"BUT," I remonstrated, endeavouring—though convinced by Pastel's earnest assertion—to be incredulous, "she was killed and you attended the inquest and identified her."

"So I did," he answered, "and I must have been strangely deluded—that woman could not have been my wife, I will never believe other than that I did distinctly see a woman in that railway carriage, and that she disappeared when the train was in motion. I am not disposed to enter into any argument psychological or physiological, it is a great mystery to me. But I have seen my wife as recently as yesterday, spoken to her, and I am not mistaken. What am I to do? What can I do? How am I to acquaint my—Janet?—I cannot tell her."

His agitation as he reached this point was great, he was almost convulsed with despair. I was silent, it was indeed an extraordinary contretemps. What to advise, what to say I knew not, and I realized that Pastel was looking to me for a solution and help to bridge over the difficulty.

"Your present wife cannot hold you guilty under the circumstances, nor your first one

responsible," I said with slow deliberation. "My dear fellow, I think the best thing is to screw your courage to the sticking point and confide the story to her—make a clean breast of it. It is regrettable now that she has been kept so much in the dark. She would have met the dilemma better. But make the best of it—tell her all."

"I cannot," he said despairingly.

"Am I to tell her?" I asked him gently, the inspiration coming after some moments of mental foginess.

"If you would, Lawless?" he returned gratefully.

"I will. The sooner she is told the better," I said decidedly; "let us return. By-the-by, Pastel, have you been threatened in any way?"

"No—she is in a bad way, I think. But she has been cognisant of my movements some time, I fancy."

"Then how did it all come about? How did you get to know where she was?"

"I had a message from her, and so worded that I dare not refuse to go. It was like a message from the grave. At the first I was puzzled, then the naked truth flashed across my mind—"

I remembered Pastel's long cherished hope.

"And have you any tidings—of the child?"

"Yes," he answered tremulously.

"My poor dear friend—what of her?"

"I shall never sell those pictures, Lawless, my patient little model was my own child."

"Will she be restored to you?"

"No—I try to think it is as well so. She must have died shortly after she sat to me. Oh, Lawless," sobbed Pastel, "had I but followed my instincts, I felt drawn to her, she might have been rescued—she might have been snatched from death. Oh, Lawless, I am an unhappy man!"

"And your wife, what of her life? Nay, Pastel, I have no right to ask you," I added, with compunction.

"She has spoken of it but little; she tried to return to her old way of life, but she met with but scant encouragement. A vagabond's life—I only knew her by her voice, she is a dreadful wreck."

We had reached Pastel's door.

"Will you tell her then?" he asked me.

"Yes. Now, Pastel, do not be far away," I urged, "I shall call you in a few moments."

"But what will you advise us to do?" he asked anxiously, detaining me a moment; "she cannot exist long," he murmured reflectively.

"Wait for the turn of events," I said encouragingly; "I am to have *carte blanche*?"

He nodded with quick comprehension.

Thus armed I felt that I had a less difficult mission.

CHAPTER VIII.

NO IMPEDIMENT.

JANET had been in great suspense I could tell by her expression. Seeing me return alone, her thoughts went anxiously to her husband.

"You have left him?" she cried with palpitating heart and reproachfully; "oh, you should not have done that. Where is he?" she cried vehemently, "I must go in search of him."

"Hush, my dear madam," I replied reassuringly, "he is safe, he is not far away. He has asked me to come in and pave the way for him. Pray be seated, and do not be anxious, there is no real cause for anxiety I think. I am sure you will feel for him," I said hurriedly. My sentences followed one on the heels of another in quick succession. I began to feel scarcely equal to my task.

She sat down reluctantly. I can scarcely call to mind my prologue, but I believe I began by acquainting her with particulars of her husband's early life that she had, but imperfectly known. I could see that she was deeply interested, perhaps wondering why I should be deputed to enter into such minutiae, perhaps a little resentful that she should not have gained so much from her husband's lips. But Pastel's wife was not demonstrative. She never interrupted me to question any statement that I made or any inference that I drew. When I reached the climactic she was terribly startled, for I had laid great stress on the episode of the inquest. I waited a moment for her to speak, but she continued silent.

"You cannot bear resentment?" I queried hesitatingly—"poor fellow, it has been a terrible shock to him——"

"No," she answered promptly, "why should I? But what is to be done? She cannot come here—but she has most right here?"

As this dawned upon her, Janet's distress became only too manifest. She jumped to the conclusion that she was no longer Pastel's wife. She perhaps had the most divine, but the other had the more legal claim.

"No, no," I answered her quickly, "that is out of the question"—I was almost inclined to smile at Janet's consternation in spite of the gravity of the situation. She had not been so much moved, until it dawned upon her that it was she who must be regarded as the usurper. "Your husband," said I with a smile, "has no intention of resigning you, such a thing has not occurred to him. He will not do so whatever is brought to bear against him. His only fear has been that you should——"

"Oh, that is foolish of him," interrupted she; "go to him, Mr. Lawless, and bring him in!—Why did he not tell me of all this miserable business? There is nothing to forgive—oh! why has he been so reticent? That horrid woman, to leave him as she did. Oh, fetch my poor husband in!" she cried excitedly—"I cannot endure the thought of his suffering through dread of me."

Janet almost pushed me out of the room.

Pastel trembled with relieved feeling when I touched his arm.

"It is as I said, Pastel; your wife only wishes that you had taken heart of grace and gone to her."

"Ah, Lawless, I have you to thank," was all he said.

Poor foolish fellow! he had no idea how blundering an ambassador I had shown myself to be. He had to thank Janet's natural *sang froid*, her quick apprehension, and good sense, rather than any tact displayed by me.

"Will you come in?" he asked me.

"No," I said. "Why should I? I have an idea that I should be in the way. Pastel, the fifth wheel of a coach——"

"I shall have to go down again to see after

her," he murmured to himself with a shiver of repugnance. "It is my duty."

"Pastel, cannot you let me go?" I appealed quickly. "You stay where you are. Give me the address."

He needed no pressing. I started when he named the street.

"Good heavens, Pastel! are you sure?"

"If you shrink from going, my dear fellow, I have no right to impose such a service upon you; in fact, I don't think I ought to accept any offer from you to go."

"But I will go. If she asks for you, why, I must come back for you—say, if she is in *extremis*."

When Pastel's door closed upon me, I felt myself committed to an unpalatable undertaking. I have a tendency to impetuously offer myself for any service if my fear and heart be caught. I say it without egotism. I weigh matters when I am committed. Now I paused to reflect. Before setting out on my quest I considered it unwise to venture in such reeking quarters on an empty stomach. It was a veritable Alsatia, and on a full stomach one is not so prone to see a miscreant in every tramp. I entered a restaurant and ordered some solid refreshment. The inner man recruited, my courage mounted from my shoes, and I briskly directed my footsteps towards the locality named by Pastel. It was not a neighbourhood I was partial to, though I had "done" it, and recorded my experience in those widely-read papers in the *Earwigger*—"Hole and Corner Adventures." The locality possessed no charm for me in broad day, and the street was one of its most unsavoury. I was anxious to be there before nightfall. We specials, although we explore unknown lands, and dive into curious quarters have our likes and dislikes, as well as other men. We do not count ourselves less fair game for marauders; we are suspicious of certain physiognomies and certain sidling movements. But we cultivate our tact, assume a coolness we don't always possess, and have always ready a most civil tongue and open, guileless countenance, the latter to assume a sinister aspect as occasion requires.

I knew that I should feel considerably relieved when my task was accomplished. Now, had Pastel been in my shoes, he would have walked briskly into the very teeth of danger, his head erect, his soul unsuspecting of the evil that has dwelt in the heart of man since the days of Cain. If an anxious soul had whispered "caution" in his ear, he would have looked down with a confident smile upon the timorous urger. I could have requisitioned a policeman, but I do not know that it is always wisdom or politic to put a member of the Force to that trouble. It is showing the red rag to the bull. My programme is to look neither to the right nor to the left, but to have my eyes at the back of my head, and my ears on the alert. I had no difficulty in finding the street Pastel gave me, and the house bearing the number I duly reached. I knocked, with some indecision, I confess, and when the door was opened cautiously, stated my business with some hang-fire emphasis.

"Faith, I thoct yez was the docther come too late," replied an unmistakable Irish voice. "Och, yez comes from the gintleman as was here yisther."

day, power to him. She's gone, poor crathur; I tould the gintleman she wasn't for long. Would yez like to see her, sorr?"

I was at first disposed to decline; but on second thought I judged it as well to enter, and leave little room for doubt.

I came down the crazy stairs feeling that I had done what I could. I had certainly seen a woman dead, but though I had had some slight acquaintance with Pastel's first wife, I could not recognize in the prematurely-aged face that now was sacred in death, the woman I had known ten or a dozen years ago.

I did not take the same route back—there was no necessity that I should. I hastened back to my own domicile. Some one might have come up for me. From my rooms I despatched a note to Pastel.

"My Dear Pastel," (I wrote)—"There is no longer any cause for inquietude. She was dead when I reached the house. I went up, but as I could not recognize her I think you should go down again to be fully assured.

"Yours,

"B. LAWLESS."

I fancied that I had done with the Pastels for a time; that now with his burthen finally removed from his shoulders, Pastel would settle down. I was mistaken. The following morning I received a note in reply to mine; it was not despairing, nor yet exuberant; it was apologetic, I thought. He wished to see me again.

"Bother the fellow!" I thought; "he might have come to me. It might have been impossible for me to go to him: if I were busy now, all this would make serious inroads on my time.

But I had forgotten all such querulousness by the time I reached Pastel's door.

"Ah," said he, intercepting me, hearing my foot (I was conscious of Janet's retreat), "you only are cognizant of this wretched business. I would have come to you if that would have settled the affair. Well, to be explicit, for satisfaction to Janet, she and I are going before a registrar, and we require someone. You won't object?"

He was rather shamefaced, there was a twinkle of comic bashfulness in his eyes. The cheerful expression in his face, his cheery voice would have persuaded a more obstinate being than I.

"My dear fellow," answered I with alacrity, "I shall be most happy. We will fancy it is your silver wedding."

And Janet appeared already bonneted.

THE END.

FATE AND THE FOUNTAIN.

MID the forest, when summer lay faint with delight,

Listless whither, I wander'd alone,
Through alley and aisle, though the sun in the height

Of his radiance meridian shone;
Athwart bole and shade of the dense colonnade
Like to lightning asleep slept each ray,
That, passing between, had to emerald sheen
'Touch'd a leaf here and there on its way.

Deep set in a hollow, closed in all around
From the glare of the burnish'd skies,
A motionless hyaline fountain I found,
Fringed with blossoms of glimmering dyes;
By its margent I lay me down, listless away,
Weary head on my pillowing palm,
Gazing dreamily down the pure lymph, where my
own
Still visage reflected its calm.

Softly and silent, as shadow of snow
Or of cloud, rose a Shape to the knee,
Spectre or Spirit I knew not nor know,
White it was and a wonder to see;
From the midst of the lymph, were it siren or
nymph,
Rose, and there, first to last, it remain'd,
And forefinger did raise, as directing my gaze,
To a mirror upheld in its hand.

Yea, with never a sound and no single sign,
Save only the sign I have said,
Linger'd there, thing so strange, that my wondering
eyne
Could but look, as by witchery led;
And lo, at a glance, I beheld, as in trance,
All within and without of the whole
Mingled evil and good that I would not or would
Of my being, mind body and soul!

I gazed, nor content nor confounded the while,
Naught of gay or of grave of all there
Me so much as did move to a tear or a smile,
With joy gladden or daunt with despair.
Then, with changes grotesque, from the grim to
burlesque,
Began the farrago to fade,
Till never a ghost of it all, in the most
Inner limbo, there linger'd unaid.

But the phantom remain'd, still as stone as
before,
With never a sign nor a sound,
Not a sign, save that finger upraised, though no
more
Dwelt there aught in the mystic profound;
Till a gleam, like the dawn, mid the darkness was
born,
And from out the weird vacancy grew
Visions fair and more bright as the day is than
night,
And more pure as than dross is the dew.

Type emblem and image of beauty and worth,
There reveal'd, as at wave of a wand;
All of loving and noble and pure on the earth,
Mid the glow of a glory beyond.
Then I started, at view thereof thrill'd through
and through,
And a voice, to elate or appal,
"Lo, of graces benign thou fain wouldest were
thine,
At whose will thine they were all in all."

But straightway the Shade began slowly to fade,
As I utter'd sore piteous cry,
"Shall my soul of its yearning be ever allay'd?
Show me what I shall be by and by!"

Sank the Vision, with eyes on me fix'd glassy-wise,
Empty eyes, sad nor sweet to explore;
While the mirror, as blurr'd by the breath of my word,
Darken'd over, went down—nothing more.

Then I wander'd away and away—from the chill
Haunted hollow, through alley and glade,
While on either hand shone, sleeping leven-like still,
Sunny shafts round about in the shade;
But ever I heard, and oft hear, word for word,
And behold, all that startled me there,
Of what more than did seem more than phrenzy or dream,—
And I wonder, and yearn, and despair!

ROBERT STEGGALL.

THE ERMINE.

I will disdain, and from your proffers fly,
As from vile dirt the snowy ermine.

COWPER here refers to a pretty fiction, still current I find, about this little creature, to the effect that it detests contact with any impurity.

There are some ants, which Sir John Lubbock knows all about, that hate untidiness and "messes" so much, that if you throw rubbish over their nests, they all decamp precipitately. They absolutely refuse to live in a parish where sanitation is not properly attended to. But the ermine carries its aversion even further than this, for it prefers death to dirt.

Better to die than be sullied.

This was the motto on the ermine-device borne by kings of Naples and of Castille. There was also a Breton "Order of the Ermine," with the same legend, and the device was adopted by "La Reine Duchesse," Anne of Brittany, wife of Charles VIII., and afterwards of Louis XII. These words—"Plutôt mourir que souiller," or "*Malo mori quam fœdari*," in the original, allude to the fancy that if an ermine be encircled with mud, it will fastidiously prefer capture to crossing the dirty barrier. "It is of so pure a nature, that it will choose rather to be taken than defile its skin." Trappers, therefore, were supposed to take advantage of this suicidal cleanliness, and build walls of dirt round the ermines, and so catch them; but, it might well be added, "the wiser and older hunters preferred putting salt on the ermine's tails."

However, the superstition greatly enhanced this dainty little animal's unsullied reputation. Thus Marvel makes the small exquisite one of the creatures of Paradise:

In fair Elysium to endure,
With milk-white lambs and ermines pure;

while, in the present world, it has been selected as the most befitting emblem of sovereignty:

Whose honour, ermine-like, can never suffer
Spot, or black soil,

So the robes of royal and noble personages are lined with this fur, "to signify," says the author of that delightful book, *Historic Devices*, "the internal purity that should regulate their conduct."

At one time it was the only fur represented on coats-of-arms, and was the natural white, with black tail-points—

—tipped with jet,
Fair ermines, spotless as the snows they press.

But afterwards, like every other object in Heraldry, it wandered into varieties—"counter-ermine," which was black, with white tail-tips; "erminois," gold, with black points; and "ermine," white, with black points, edged with red.

A special interest attaches to the whimsical exaltation of this elegant creature, as the ermine is really—under a climatic variation of fur—only the *stoat*, which is as guileful, stealthy, and wicked a little assassin as ever ran on four legs.

Yet, they say, "what's in a name?"

PHIL ROBINSON.

"HOME CHIMES."

BY COULSON KERNAHAN.

TO burdened heart and throbbing brain how sweet

The evening peace;
O'er crowded mart, dark warehouse, noisy street,
From tower and steeple, charming bells repeat
A glad release.

And when enslipped in our home at rest,
The fire before,
Wearied and worn we sit—a welcome guest,
Is then "HOME CHIMES,"—for home is still the best,
The wide world o'er.

What care we then for dusty dance or ball,
Where giddy throngs
Gossip and gabble? To our peaceful hall
Come Poets, Thinkers, ever at our call,
With tales or songs.

Then ring ye on like bells that sweetly bear
At evening times,
Their joyous largess; welcome everywhere,
In humble cot, or sculptured palace fair,
Ring on "HOME CHIMES."

A TERRIBLE ORDEAL.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

SHE was a typical Evangeline, a blonde with golden hair, and the life she led at Mardale Villa, was as bright as her own sweet face. Evangeline had only been home from school about six weeks, and what happy weeks they had been, her father and mother giving into every whim; her days passed in careering about on frolic bent with her two brothers.

Aye, two brothers they were to each other; at school and college together, and Mardale Villa their home in the holidays; one of them, however,

was only Hugh McNair's nephew and adopted son, a fact which Evangeline was beginning to realize full well as she lavished on him all the love of her young heart.

It was a bright happy family, the only shadow that lay athwart it being that Mrs. McNair was a great invalid and frequently compelled to keep her room for weeks.

When the two young men returned to college (as since the winter term was fast approaching they would do before long) Evangeline would be almost entirely left to the charge of her father, but no one seemed to think that was much of a trouble since it were difficult to say which was the most devoted, Evangeline to her father, or the grand-looking descendant of a long line of McNairs to his beautiful daughter.

Mardale Villa was a gabled cottage standing in its own grounds, about half-a-mile from the market place at Abbotsleigh; and, luxuriant in flowers as its garden had been all the summer, Mardale Villa, both within and without was as bright looking as the joyous faces of its inmates.

The golden tints of autumn were, however, beginning to mellow the green foliage, and chrysanthemums to assert themselves in the flower beds; October had already set in, and with it an autumnal chill on every heart, George McNair, Evangeline's only brother, and Fraser Griffith, to whom she gave the same dear title but a very different quality of love, were to start for Oxford in a few days.

"And then no more fun till Christmas" pouted Evangeline, "but never mind, boys, we will have our revenge when Father Christmas does arrive. What dancing, what masquerading, what acting; for Papa says if the dear mother is well enough we may ask the whole of Abbotsleigh to a fête—meantime we will live in anticipation."

And the two young men, echoing her notes of joy over the future they were predicting for themselves, kissed their sweet young sister and departed.

For several days after they were gone, Evangeline was the brightest of the bright. "She must be threefold glad now they were not at home to help her," she said.

And she succeeded, for as the very spirit of joy and merriment she rejoiced those around her; no one could be dull where Evangeline was.

She took long walks with her father, came back full of life and fun to relate their adventures to her mother, and in the lengthening evenings, before the lights were brought in, she would warble forth old English ballads in her soft musical voice, filling the whole villa with the sweet strains.

With November came wind and fog. Mrs. McNair, after an imprudent walk round the garden, was so ill that, being carried up to her room, the doctor said she must not leave it again for some time. This was the first check to Evangeline's happiness, the mother's absence seemed to cast a shade over the house, which even her own exuberant spirits were powerless to overcome.

She and her father still took long walks, but there was no more singing in the firelight, and not infrequently Evangeline would pass the twilight hours alone, while Mr. McNair was sitting with his wife upstairs. During these long solitudes, many were the dreams in which Evangeline indulged; till now she had been so happy she had had no time for dreaming.

They were scarcely love dreams even now, for

Evangeline's heart had not as yet been altogether awakened—no—she would place herself in every sort of difficult position which she thought life could produce, and then try to work out the problem of what she would do under exceptional circumstances.

Sweet imaginative Evangeline, she weaved for herself many a strange history in which she enacted heroine; but she never succeeded in reaching the extreme that reality had in store for her.

She was sitting as usual on the hearthrug, in front of the fire, one cold evening, Mr. McNair being upstairs, when she heard the hall bell ring.

Who could it be at that hour, it was too late for visitors?

She did not move, however, but waited there and listened.

A man's voice asking for her father. "No he would not come in, preferred that Mr. McNair should come to the door to him—his name was Gentian Colehurst."

"What a queer name," thought Evangeline, as she put a footstool under her head in perfect security that the strange man would eventually be shown into her father's study.

Another minute and Mr. McNair, three steps at a time, came down the stairs—a rapid muffled conversation followed of which Evangeline could hear no word, and as she expected the stranger passed into the study. She would go up to her mother, she thought; so, languidly rising and stretching herself, she sauntered leisurely upstairs. Somehow she seemed to have forgotten to sing and dance as was her wont. She went very quietly, almost stealthily, into her mother's room, for no especial reason save that she felt subdued. On the sofa lay Mrs. McNair, sobbing violently.

"What is the matter, mother, darling mother; you will make yourself quite ill; has anything happened to vex you?"

Mrs. McNair looked for a moment very wistfully at her fair young daughter; then she turned away from her with a suppressed sob.

"Nothing is the matter, my child. I am only ill and weak."

Evangeline knelt down beside her, and soothed her till the sobs ceased and the exhausted woman lay as one powerless to speak or move.

The girl kissed her softly on the forehead, then slipped as quietly out the room as she had come into it, downstairs to the kitchen in search of beef-tea which the doctor had recommended should be given every two hours to Mrs. McNair.

When she reached a turn in the staircase, about half-way down, she heard voices in the hall, and craned her head over the balusters; her father and the man with the strange name, Gentian Colehurst, were talking there.

On account of his odd name, Evangeline was curious to see him; he was rather a little man and had his back to her at first. If he would only look round. Ah! now she could see his face, and what a quaint face it was; it was so full of a certain wicked humour. He seemed to be threatening her father, for he was shaking his fist violently, as he said—

"Then you won't give up those papers, McNair? Well, if physical force will not make you, we'll try what a few revelations about the past will do."

Physical force, indeed! That little oddity

pitted against her stalwart father. Evangeline felt inclined to run downstairs and treat him to one of her ringing laughs for his temerity, but the sudden pallor, that even in the dim light she could notice had come over her father's face, arrested her steps and brought a great thud to her heart.

Was it possible that these revelations to which Mr. Gentian Colehurst alluded could produce terror?

Another second or two, and their conversation becoming more subdued, the stranger went out at the hall door saying, however, loud enough for Evangeline to hear—

"You will meet me, then, and bring the letters. Only on these terms will I leave the neighbourhood."

He was gone; and Mr. McNair, with a heavy tread, passed into his study and closed the door.

Not till then did Evangeline creep very slowly on. She could not run or laugh. It seemed as if a heavy weight was dragging her back at every step.

"What dire and mysterious influence could this man have over her beloved father?" she wondered.

She took the beef-tea up to her mother, who, after sipping it, asked if any one was with her father. On being told briefly that a gentleman had been there, but was gone, faint, suffering Mrs. McNair gave a sigh of relief and seemed to revive.

That there was something wrong, Evangeline felt sure—oh, if she only knew what it was!

Presently the first bell rang for dinner. She went to her room to dress, still very thoughtful; then into the dining-room, as the second bell rang.

Mr. McNair joined her there, but it was evident to his daughter's watchful eyes that he, usually a very particular man, had bestowed no attention whatever on his toilette.

If she could only help him, do or say something to cheer; she made a slight advance by asking what was the matter, but he replied so shortly—almost sternly—that there was nothing the matter, that she felt it would be wiser to appear as if she had no suspicions.

Gentian Colehurst's name was never mentioned, nor any allusion made to the visit of a stranger; but the repast was a very silent one, and totally unlike the usual cheery *tête-à-têtes* in which the father and daughter were wont to indulge.

As soon as it was over, and the maid who had been waiting at table was in the offices, the door being closed that divided them from the rest of the house, Mr. McNair, instead of going to his wife's room, as he usually did at this hour, returned forthwith to his study.

Evangeline remained alone in the dining-room in a state of utter perplexity. Should she send for the boys?—for that something was very wrong she felt certain. No; in none of her dreams about what she should do under trying circumstances, had she contemplated trouble coming to her father. Ah! she could smell his cigar. The hall-door closed very quietly; he must have gone out. She went to see. Yes, the study door was open—to meet that man, of course; had they not made an appointment?

For quite half an hour Evangeline stayed there alone, till at last Susan came to take away the

dessert and put out the gas in the dining-room. She had a letter in her hand; she had been a long time with the McNairs, and was very fond of Evangeline, taking some liberties in consequence.

"You do look lonesome like, Miss, now the young gentlemen is gone and master is always up with missus. It's too bad to leave you like this; you want companions."

"Oh, I don't mind, Susan," answered Evangeline, with a sad smile. "What is that letter?"

"It's for master. I thought he was still here; I'll take it up."

"No, never mind, Susan. Give it to me; I am going up to mamma's room."

Evangeline took the letter, and put it into her pocket, as she went softly into her mother's room.

"Hugh—Is that Hugh?" murmured Mrs. McNair when she heard the gliding footsteps.

"No, mother, dear, it is I—your Evangeline."

"Where is your father?"

"Gone to smoke a cigar in the garden. He will be here directly." The tones were steady but the girl's heart was heavy.

"To smoke—how horrid—he knows I hate smoke."

"Oh, he will not smell of it a bit when he comes in out of the fresh air, and you know, mother, darling, men must smoke sometimes or they would be as savage as bears."

Thus did Evangeline try to soothe the fretfulness of illness, and for a while she sat there chatting softly till Mrs. McNair fell asleep.

Sleep was so precious to the invalid that she would not have her awakened, and she slipped downstairs to bid the servants be very still and not go near the room, to which she at once returned and sat by the window, the blind not being drawn down—watching.

If her father would only come back—ah! then the dead weight would be removed from her heart—that Gentian Colehurst had talked of physical strength—what would happen if he could not make her father do what he listed.

She looked at the clock on the mantel-shelf—twenty minutes to ten—still Mrs. McNair slept and all was silence save the ticking of the clock and the occasional falling of a coal from the grate. Yes, there go the town chimes—the quarter to ten—she must go down and send the servants off to bed—they were early people at Mardale Villa—quite an hour and a half since her father went out—it was strange, and she felt horribly anxious—if anything should have happened to him what should she do?—the boys absent—and her poor helpless, fretful mother on her hands—it was terrible to think of.

The click of the lock of the little side gate—some one was coming slowly, almost stealthily, across the grass—the moonlight showed his features. Hurrah! it was her father; she jumped up with a bound that startled Mrs. McNair, who exclaimed:—

"What is it—have I been asleep?"

"A few minutes; yes."

"Has Hugh come in?"

"He is in the garden—I can see him from here." And without waiting for further conversation Evangeline ran down to meet him.

"Mamma has been asking for you over and over again," she cried—"do come to her at once."

"Yes, my love—at once. It was so delightful out of doors, I took a longer stroll than I had intended. I wish you had been with me."

"I wish to goodness I had," she said so pointedly that he turned to examine her face and ask her why.

"Oh merely that it has been very dull here." He patted her on the shoulder and told her she must not expect always to live in a state of excitement. Then they went upstairs, his arm around her. Evangeline was once more at peace, assuredly nothing very momentous had occurred. Her troubles however, could not be said to be over; sleep had by no means benefited Mrs. McNair, and all through the night she was so restless and ill that it was nearly three o'clock before Evangeline was at last dismissed by her father to go and seek a few hours of repose.

Fairly worn out by the varied emotions of the evening, she at once fell into a heavy sleep, from which about seven o'clock she was suddenly awakened by a loud ringing at the hall bell and the noisy clatter of several voices.

She bounded out of bed and ran to the window—three or four men were standing at the outer door, among them the Abbotsleigh constable.

Her face blanched with terror, Evangeline dressed herself as quickly as her trembling hands would let her, and was standing beside the group almost as soon as Mr. McNair, who had been hastily summoned by Susan.

"Gentian Colehurst—his name had been found in some letters in his pocket—had been discovered dead—in the wood behind the villa by some men going to work. He had been seen coming out of Mardale Villa last evening about half-past six. Did Mr. McNair know anything about him?" This was the gist, mingled with many interruptions and digressions, of the story these people came to tell, and it would be difficult to say whether on Evangeline's face or her father's, horror was the most rigidly fixed as they listened.

Evangeline did not utter a word, but Mr. McNair was compelled to speak, which he did in a low, husky voice.

"Yes, Gentian Colehurst was here yesterday, between six and half-past. He is an American; I had not seen him for years."

"What did he come here for?"

"Simply to renew an old acquaintance."

"And you have not seen him since 6.30 yesterday."

"I have not."

"Did you make any appointment to meet again?"

"To-day; yes, he was to call here, and he is dead—poor fellow—poor fellow—he always had a strong temper and a weak heart."

"It is not his heart that killed him" exclaimed one of the men. "He has been murdered!"

"Murdered! Great God! By whom?"

"That is exactly what we should like to know," said the policeman, "and hoped your honour would be able to throw some light on the subject. Had he any money about him?"

"I know nothing of Gentian Colehurst or his affairs, beyond a slight acquaintance in America some ten years ago, when I gave him my address here. His arrival was a surprise to me, and I

should have treated him with some hospitality, if it had not been for Mrs. McNair's very precarious state of health."

"He came into the Golden Dragon and ordered a steak," remarked one of the party, "telling the landlady to look alive, for he had an appointment."

"I wonder who he was acquainted with in Abbotsleigh?" mused Mr. McNair.

The men shrugged their shoulders, and said perhaps it would come out at the coroner's inquest.

At the mention of a coroner's inquest, the look of horror on Mr. McNair's face seemed to intensify; and, as for Evangeline, she stood clutching a low balustrade at the side of the door, her features rigid, motionless, as if she had been carved out of marble. On a sudden her father seemed to remark her, and said—

"Had you not better go into the house, my child? But do not let your mother hear anything of this."

Evangeline, however, shook her head. She would hear all there was to hear, drink out this cup of astounding horror to the very dregs.

What did it all mean? For the first time in her life she had detected her father in a falsehood, and how much this falsehood covered she dared not even consider.

As far, however, as the present inquiry was concerned, there was little more to hear; the men soon after departed, and Mr. McNair said he would accompany them into the town and see what farther investigation would produce.

It almost seemed as if he was anxious to get away from his daughter's large searching eyes.

She, meanwhile, crept rather than walked back into the house, and sat down by an open window gasping for air.

"You will meet me then, and bring the letters." Over and over again did this sentence echo through her brain till it almost maddened her.

What should she do? What should she do? The sound of Susan's steps coming across the hall with the breakfast tray, brought her to a sense of what she considered expedient. She jumped up.

"Isn't it awful, Susan, to think of that gentleman who called on papa yesterday having been found murdered. Pray don't say a word about it to mamma; she has been so ill all night; I shall be quite thankful when Dr. Williams comes."

The words came out in an excited gush; any one but Susan would have seen that they were far from natural.

She, however, was not a little shocked herself by what had occurred.

"It is awful," she answered; "and to think the poor gentleman should have been last seen here. Merciful thing that nobody from this house went out late after dinner last night—isn't it, miss?"

"Yes," replied Evangeline feebly, and her face grew so white the very lips were colourless.

"You do look ill, miss. Have a cup of warm tea; you seem to be that upset."

Susan poured out the tea, talking the while—

"And the master's gone into Abbotsleigh; we shall have him ill next. Don't you think Mr. George and Mr. Fraser should be sent for?"

"Why, Susan? Oh do; let them be happy and at peace."

"Well, I dunno, Miss, but they're better able to fend with all this than you are."

"With what Susan?" and Evangeline pulled herself together. "There is nothing—the impression of this horror will wear off, I hope, and beyond that, what have we to do with Mr.—Mr.—that gentleman's death. By Christmas, when the boys come, it will be forgotten, and mamma well again, we will have a right merry time."

Her pale agonized face, however, belied her words, and as she finished speaking she sank back sobbing in her chair.

After a while Susan soothed her into composure, and then Dr. Williams arrived and she went with him up to her mother's room. He found Mrs. McNair very ill; much more ailing than when he had last seen her. There must be no excitement, no allusion to any external event he told Evangeline, her heart was so weak that any sudden shock might kill her in an instant; on the other hand, with care she might live a long time. Of course Dr. Williams knew what had occurred, and forbade that even newspapers should be taken into Mrs. McNair's room; in truth she was too ill to read them.

Still, "let the boys remain in peace at Oxford," was Evangeline's cry. She loved them both too well to wish them to share her misery—loved them, aye—did she not know full well that Fraser Griffiths' love for her was more than that of a brother?

In the course of the morning Mr. McNair came back; he did not appear to wish for an interview with his daughter, scarcely spoke to or looked at her, but expressed the deepest anxiety about his wife's state, repeating over and over again that all disastrous intelligence must be kept from her.

"You need not fear," said Evangeline, not daring to look at him as she spoke. "I will shield my mother from all knowledge that may harm her, even at my own risk."

Before two days had passed Evangeline's devotion was put to a terrible proof.

An official arrived at Mardale Villa to cross question the inmates, in order, if possible, to get some light thrown on what was still a mystery.

Beyond the coming of Gentian Colehurst at 6.30, the servants had nothing to tell. Their evidence was dismissed as worthless.

Then Evangeline was sent for; her father was in the room standing by the window when she entered it.

After several almost irrelevant questions, which she answered in all good faith, she was asked—

"Did any one to your knowledge go out of this house after seven o'clock on the evening of the supposed murder?"

Evangeline hesitated for a minute, while she looked at her father's white face, thought of her fragile mother whom a shock must kill, of the two dear ones at Oxford whose future it was her power to make or mar, and then she, whose soul was as pure as crystal, said in a low tone—

"No one to my knowledge went out of this house that night."

"You and your father passed the evening in your mother's room, I believe."

She bowed her head—words failed her.

"Thank you, Miss McNair. I have nothing more to ask here. We must look further a-field for information about this man's untimely end."

The detective soon after took his leave, and in outward seeming Mardale Villa assumed its everyday aspect.

The first time Hugh McNair saw Evangeline alone, he would have put his arm round her and drawn her to him, but she shrank away with a shudder; all the love that had once blossomed so freely in her heart for him had been killed.

She had saved him, but in saving had learnt to loathe—aye not only him but herself for what she considered her participation in his crime.

Yet there were moments when Evangeline could not believe it possible; she must have dreamt it all, her father could never be a murderer—there had been no avowal, no account of anything that had happened, nothing, save that she believed he went to meet Gentian Colehurst that night and had since looked pale and aged.

It was already well into December, the talk about the murder had nearly ceased, though nothing had been discovered. Mrs. McNair was much better, and the doctor had given permission for her to leave her room.

Then came a crucial moment for Evangeline. Her mother, downstairs, how would it be possible to keep from her some knowledge of what had happened? The first gossiping neighbour who came in to call on her would be sure to tell her the whole tale, and the very name of Gentian Colehurst would she felt sure, give her the dreaded shock.

She sought her father in the study she had persistently avoided since the fatal evening, and said briefly, almost authoritatively—

"You must make an arrangement to take mamma away from here at once—abroad—to the sea—I care not where, but we must go away."

"If you think it best," he answered cowering before her with averted eyes.

And with only a little more discussion it was settled they would go to the sea and receive the boys there when their Oxford vacation began.

A house was taken at West Port, a warm, sheltered watering place, and thither Mrs. McNair was transported without having had any communication with her Abbotsleigh neighbours.

Radiant with joy at the idea of a happy Christmas party, the two young men arrived there about the 22nd of December—George glad that his mother was convalescent; Fraser rejoicing that he would meet Evangeline again—Evangeline the bright and beautiful, who was the very star of his life.

Evangeline came down the stairs to meet them. She never ran or sang now, but a glad smile lighted up her pale face just for a second when she saw them, but it speedily faded away, and gave place to a dark, grave look.

George gave her a noisy, brotherly kiss; Fraser's greeting was gentler, more tender; but she emancipated herself from his encircling arm, and returned his fond gaze with so much sadness. That, perplexed by his reception, he followed George into the drawing-room.

The rest of the day passed without incident; but it was as though a chill lay on the little party, and that its attendant frost had nipped all their gay spirits in the bud. Aye, there was a chill, and the sun was veiled.

Evangeline had been their sun. Would she ever shine in full radiance on their hearth again?

Fraser was the first to notice the difference; he caught Evangeline alone before the dressing-bell rang.

"My darling—my Evangeline! you look ill and worried. What is the matter?"

"Nothing, Fraser—nothing. I am very well;" but she shook from head to foot.

Fraser had never called her by such endearing names before. Six weeks ago how glad they would have made her! but now she must not, dare not, hear them.

"Has anything happened during our absence?" was the next question.

"What should have happened?"

"Well, I don't know. Uncle McNair has aged by twenty years, while you——"

"You will say next that I look twenty years older;" and she laughed forcedly.

"No, no, Evangeline; the matter is too serious for a jest. What has happened to you both?"

"Worry about mamma, I suppose."

"But she is better; you are not worrying now."

"Dr. Williams says a sudden shock may kill her at any moment; is that no cause for worry, Fraser?"

He looked very grave.

"But," she went on, "don't let us talk of sad things the moment you come back. You have been getting on well at Oxford, have you not?"

"Yes, very well. I shall take my degree soon; when I am in orders, Evangeline, may the dream of my life be accomplished. Will you be my wife?"

She shook her head, but there were tears in her eyes.

"I cannot marry you," she said in a very low voice.

"Cannot marry me, Evangeline; why not? Have I deceived myself; it cannot be possible. You do love me?"

For a second or two there was silence between them; then Evangeline said still in low and husky accents—

"No, Fraser, I do not love you; love you, that is, better than George."

"Oh, Evangeline!" and there was such a depth of despair in the heart-cry that for a moment she held out her hand as though to bid him take comfort, for the words she had spoken were not the truth. The recollection, however, of the cloud that hung over her once more stayed her. "No, Fraser must not be enveloped in its gloom;" so she drew herself up with a cold—

"I am sorry, very sorry; but I cannot help it, Fraser," and in crushing all the hope out of his life, removing the beacon that was lighting him to a port of safety and peace, she imagined that she was keeping suffering and misery away from him.

Even as she looked on his pained features, she believed he would soon get over his disappointment, and as the husband of another lead a happy, useful life; she only would be bowed down with anguish; she only had a burden to carry which no one could share, but which, nevertheless, was crushing her even to the dust.

No more conversation, however, and for this Evangeline was thankful, could go on now; the dinner bell rang, but instead of the merry, joyous

party who had separated a few weeks back, a very subdued and saddened one was assembled round the table; only George was like his old self, and it puzzled him not a little to see how dejected and out of spirits the others were.

Thus passed three or four days, Evangeline never went out or laughed now with the boys, but kept very closely by her mother's side, avoiding all *tête-à-têtes* with her father or Fraser. Wind and storm were raging outside, and they were all well seated round the fire one afternoon, George reading some newspapers that had arrived by the second post. One was the *Abbotsleigh Examiner*, it was not interdicted now, since all about Gentian Colehurst had long since been forgotten.

"Here is a queer thing," cried George all of a sudden, "a dagger of foreign design has been found in the wood near our house, close to the spot where Gentian Colehurst's body lay. So the assassin must have been a foreigner—great Heaven! What is it?"

A scream from Evangeline, shrill and clear, made him throw down the paper.

"My mother—look at my mother!"

In a moment Mr. McNair and Evangeline were beside her, she was carried to the couch, and her dress loosened, the windows and door were set wide open to give her air, but all efforts were unavailing—she was dead. The mention of Gentian Colehurst's name and the story of the finding of the dagger had killed her.

Could it be that carefully guarded though she had been, some suspicion of the truth had reached her—no one knew. But she was at peace now, and Evangeline, even as she stood weeping there, could scarcely help envying the rest and peace into which her beloved mother had passed. After his wife's death the cloud hanging over Hugh McNair seemed to blacken. Evangeline never spoke to him if she could help it, and even Fraser, who seemed to suspect there was something wrong, kept aloof; only George treated him with frank cordiality.

The day the two young men returned to Oxford to complete their last term, Mr. McNair and Evangeline went home to the desolate house at Abbotsleigh.

What a home-coming it was to both! To Evangeline it seemed as if every affection in which her life had once been so rife had died, for had she not sent Fraser Griffith away with another of those bitter assurances that she could never love him. The whole place too was so pregnant with horrible memories that she wondered sometimes if she would ever be able to stay there without going mad, but as she looked at her father's bent form, haggard face, and hollow piercing eyes, she felt she could not leave him, she would share to the bitter end the fearful punishment that was racking him with torture. The only ray of satisfaction in her darkened life being that neither George nor Fraser would ever know the truth.

The existence *à deux* which this wretched father and daughter were condemned to lead, with no confidence between them, no communication, in fact, except what the absolute requirements of the day necessitated, told even more on Hugh McNair than on Evangeline, and at last he broke down utterly. She went into his room one day with a message, and found him lying back in his arm-chair, sobbing violently.

She could not resist the impulse; he was her father, whatever his sin, and for the first time since she had believed him guilty, she, of her own accord, laid her hand on his shoulder.

"Fretting is of no avail," she said; "what can I say or do to comfort you?"

"Believe that I not so guilty as you think me," he answered. "Oh, Evangeline, my child, how low have I fallen, when even you forsake me!"

"I have never forsaken you, or I should not be here now, a living thing left you by God for your consolation."

"A living thing! aye, yet all your life has gone, my child; you are only the shell of your lost joy; dead to feeling and happiness, even as your poor mother."

"Hush! do not speak of her. Tell me what I can do for you."

"For me?" and there was a vague wondering look in his face, and, as if fear had taken absolute possession of him. He turned from her and fled.

She did not attempt to follow him, but she too sat down in the chair he had just vacated and wept.

Was the secret he was carrying about, striving to hide so carefully in his own bosom, not in itself a greater punishment than any that man could invent? And, in sharing it, was she not merely working out the old-time command that the sins of the fathers should be visited on the children?

Poor Evangeline! it was a desperate fate; but, would it last for all her life; aye, for all, she decided. Fraser Griffith should never clasp her hand—the hand of a murderer's daughter.

Even as she sat there weeping she drew a letter from her pocket and read it, it was from Fraser, a last appeal to her love. She took up a pen and indited a few cold lines, bidding him think of her no more, she was dead to him for ever.

A few months more and his Oxford career over—instead of taking orders he went abroad, and, save for an occasional letter to George, saying he was doing well, growing rich in his Australian exile, no mention was made of him. It seemed to be a relief to Hugh McNair when Fraser went away, but life at Mardale Villa was none the less difficult for Evangeline. It was a constant struggle to appear what she was not, and the effort was wearing her, as well as the wretched man who was its cause, well nigh to a shadow.

George had gone to London to read for the Bar, he knew but little of the home trouble, kept from him as it was by his devoted sister.

But it was clear that Hugh McNair's end was approaching, and with it Evangeline's cares increased: the old man was growing almost childish and she dared not leave him for a moment, in dread of what he might say to a stranger. Never as yet, however, had he confessed his guilt to her.

Five years had passed, she was little more than twenty-two, yet more than one grey hair might be plucked from the sweet young head. It was the anniversary of her mother's death. She was sitting on a low footstool at her father's feet, while he rested in his arm-chair. There had been a long silence.

"My child, you have been very good to me," he said at last, in husky accents.

"I am your daughter" she answered, never being thoroughly able to overcome her hardness

when she spoke to him, though of late his enfeebled state had brought her nearer to him.

He placed his hand on her head.

"Blessed Evangeline—you will have your reward—fear not—there is peace for you, child—I have had no peace since I saw him die."

She started up aghast.

"Nay, I am not to blame—as you think—he willed it, he bought the dagger, it was his—they found it—he would have killed me, I wrenched it from him and in self-defence I used it fatally."

For a second or two Evangeline could not speak, then she asked.

"Who was this man?"

"Your mother's half-brother."

She uttered a suppressed scream, but without noting it he went on feebly—

"He was always a wicked boy, grew up into a bad man—was a curse to every one who had any connection with him. He robbed your mother of money left her by her father, whose name he forged. We forgave him the crime on condition he never came near us again, but I held the papers to use against him if he persecuted us—for years he stayed in America and we heard nothing—then on a sudden he came back, and—I am weary—there is no more to tell—ah, how fearfully, how terribly I have suffered—but no one knows it—but you and me—keep it from George—from George!"

There was no light in the room but that of the fire. As she stood over him, however, she could see how white and ashen he looked. He, the stalwart handsome man who had been her pride. She took his hand, it was cold as marble. She leant over him and kissed his forehead, he faintly smiled a recognition. "May God in his mercy forgive you," she whispered.

The hand she held tried to press her fingers but all power had left him—he gave one sigh, so deep, it seemed to rend his feeble frame, and the spirit departed.

Evangeline was alone with the dead—his terrible life-ordeal was over—not hers! Till her own summons came, she must guard that fearful secret, be true to George, watch and keep it from him.

Still after a while peace and content—now all danger was past—came to Evangeline. She led a solitary life at Mardale Villa, while in works of mercy and charity she strove to expiate the past.

Fraser Griffiths came home after some years, bringing a wife and child who was Evangeline's joy—George also married after a time and occasionally brought his little ones to see their aunt at Mardale Villa.

They often wondered why, young and beautiful as she still was, her hair should be quite white and stowed away under her cap. When talking the matter over with each other, little did they guess that aunt Evangeline had lost her youth in guarding a secret that would have marred their lives.

A SUCCESSFUL SMALL LIBRARY.

BOOKS are happily nowadays not classified among the luxuries, but rather among the necessities of life; and compulsory education has given even the poorest the power to use, if not to enjoy, and be benefited by them. Unhappily, however, the time has not yet come when the poorest

throughout the whole country can afford to read what they wish, notwithstanding the low figure at which most of the very best books are now issued; and hence many read only their weekly newspaper, and consequently have no inconsiderable amount of spare time on their hands. Universal experience, however, shows that spare time with nothing particular to do generally means temptation; and libraries, by affording interesting reading at these critical times, remove the temptation, and may consequently be classified as one of the best methods of social reform. Our government has recognized this, and the result is the various Free Library Acts—all of which are, however, merely permissive, and have not been taken advantage of to the extent anticipated—probably through the impatience of further taxation manifested by many rate-payers. Hence many villages, and not a few large towns, are still without their Libraries, though possessed of no lack of public houses. To the inhabitants of such places who subscribe themselves *pro bono publico*, the writer would like to tell how the small library of which he has charge was formed and is conducted.

At the outset it may be as well to say that the population of the village amounts to less than twelve hundred, and is of a very mixed character, there being a colliery, brickworks, and woollen factory in it; and, as our village is on the coast, also a few fishermen.

For a year or two there had been some talk, especially at the beginning of winter, of the necessity of having a library, and when the feeling became frequently expressed, a few energetic young fellows got handbills displayed summoning a meeting of all interested in the formation of a local library. At the meeting, which was a fairly large one, our pastor presided, and spoke of the manifold good to the community of a library, and the following quotation from a recent writer was well received—

“Let those who pride themselves upon their devotion to the so-called practical, reflect that the advantages of a library are no longer of a purely literary character, and are becoming less and less so; that the ‘arts and mysteries’ of manufacture are no longer taught by word of mouth alone to indentured apprentices, but that the ‘master workmen’ of the nineteenth-century speak through books to all; and that in proportion as our workmen become intelligent and skilful does their labour increase in value to themselves and to the state.”

Before the close of the meeting subscriptions to the extent of five pounds were intimated, and it was agreed that all at the meeting should consider themselves members of the library committee and do their best by writing to friends interested in the village to bring the amount of the subscriptions up to at least twenty pounds. In about a month afterwards it was found that twenty-two pounds and several parcels of books had been received, and it was therefore resolved to purchase books at once and make a beginning.

Choosing the books was rather a difficult matter, and to get out of the difficulty each one suggested the names of those he knew to be good, for it had previously been agreed that though an effort would be made to procure such books as the public might ask for, yet the library was on no account to circulate what the committee considered bad

books. A satisfactory list of more than three hundred volumes was then made out, every one of which was considered a standard work of its kind, and as many of them as could be got in good condition second-hand were first bought, the rest were then bought new. When fixing on the edition to be bought Mr. Johnson's remark was kept in mind as far as possible. “Books that you may carry to the fire and hold readily in your hand are the most useful after all.”

The next concern was to find a suitable central place for the library, and this difficulty would have been well nigh insurmountable had the School Board not generously given the use of one of the class rooms in the village school for the purpose. The schoolmaster also cheerfully undertook the office of librarian. When the books were received, stamped, and arranged, a few simple rules such as it was possible to enforce were drawn out and conspicuously displayed in the room. For the guidance of others who may follow suit they may be given:—(1) The subscription is sixpence per quarter, payable in advance. (2) A book may not be retained by any one reader for a longer period than one month. (3) Any one damaging or failing to return a book is responsible for the same. (4) Two books per week are allowed to each reader. (5) The library is open between five and seven o'clock on Saturday evenings.

An opening public meeting was held, and a few who had sneered at the idea of a library being established in such a small village were present, and were the very first to take advantage of it, now that the work of beginning had been done by others. That night thirty-five readers were enrolled, and on the following Saturday fourteen more came for books. From that time to this there has been an average of eleven persons come to change their books every week, and rather more than eleven hundred volumes were taken out the first year. This represents a very large addition to the reading hitherto done in the district, as an interesting book is read not by the subscriber only, but also by the other members of the family, and sometimes even by friends before it is returned.

The strongest argument of those who threw cold water on the scheme was, that even if by enthusiasm a library were established, there were no funds available for its continued maintenance. However, after a fair start had been made, it was found that the library attracted gifts from all parts of the world; from natives of the village who had left home even twenty years before; two of whom also give handsome annual subscriptions. The fees from readers, at the low charge of two shillings per annum, amount to about three pounds; and the library, though now in its seventh year, has annually, after all working expenses have been paid, a considerable surplus, which is used for the strong rebinding of such books as have become dilapidated by wear and tear, and the purchase of new books, as well as a considerable number of magazines, which in our experience are a great attraction—the yearly volumes being taken out about three times as often as any other books, though they had been read before as monthly parts when first published.

To tell all the good which has been done by the library is really very difficult, as we know not the

"might have beens," had many of these young men and women not spent their evenings in reading as they have done; but we do know that the workpeople of our district who read are now much more able to take an intelligent interest in public questions; and if "in the world's broad field of battle" they be not "heroes in the strife," they certainly are less like the "dumb driven cattle." We also know that a number of young men have, through meeting at the library, formed friends of those of kindred tastes, and are mutually helped.

The reading habit seems to grow by what it feeds on, for, since the opening of the library the number of books taken out has annually increased, and the most constant readers, since they see that the library is not sufficient to afford them enough new reading, have begun to take one or more of the magazines for themselves, so that in our case the truth of Mr. Mullins' words have been proved:—"Booksellers who feared that they (Free Libraries) would injure their trade, find that they create a taste for reading, and multiply their customers." This taste for reading being once formed by the perusal of the very best books at a cost to the readers of less than a penny per volume, it will be strange, indeed, if they ever become patrons of that class of periodical literature known as the "penny dreadful." Another result of the library's work—and this has been pointed out to the librarian by an employer—is, that the operatives who are readers seem much more contented than the others, and many of them, who earn less than a pound a week, would add their "Amen" to Sir John Herschel's words:—"Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead, under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. Give a man this taste and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making him a happy man; unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse collection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest, the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages." Perhaps one or two of them would even say, with Fenelon:—"If the crowns of all kingdoms of the Empire were laid down at my feet, in exchange for my books and my love of reading, I would spurn them all."

To any who think that a similar library might be established in their neighbourhood we would say, "Make a start at your earliest convenience, and there is every probability that you will be successful, but whether or not, you will deserve and receive the sympathy and thanks of all right-thinking persons in your community; for there can now be no doubt that, 'in the work of popular education through libraries, it is after all, not the few great libraries, but the thousand small ones, that do most for the people.'"

A POLSON

IN THE ABBEY.

BUT one short step from all the bustle,
The City's ceaseless toil and hustle,
And dirt and din;
From votaries of golden treasure,
The giddy throng that seeks its pleasure
'Midst shame and sin.

I pass beneath the Abbey's portals,
And leave the anxious, struggling mortals
Without the gate.
The very air seems sacred to me,
And blessed thoughts, all quick to woo me,
Around me wait.

By heroes' tombs I fondly linger,
To mark the change Time's wasting finger
Works all in vain
On monuments that bear the story—
Here blurred and dim, but bright in glory—
Of martyrs slain.

The organ's solemn tones ascending,
The singers' voices sweetly blending,
Float o'er the aisle;
Then die away in quaint old places,
Where ancestors of kingly races
Here rest awhile.

The "dim, religious light," revealing
The old grey walls and carved ceiling,
Falls o'er the nave;
Then reigns a stillness calm and holy,
The mind is filled with thoughts which wholly
Are grand and grave.

As o'er the world the soul arises,
Above its struggles, hopes and prizes,
To views more clear,
All sects are lost into each other,
And man claims every man his brother,
Who wanders here.

H. McD.

"HER HEART'S DESIRE."

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON,

Author of "Deceivers Ever," "Juliet's Guardian,"
"Pure Gold," "A North Country Maid," &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

FALSE AND FAITHLESS.

KIT was silent for a minute, looking at her with a strange expression of mingled anger and tenderness. "Darling, you may be engaged a thousand times over, but you love me, and only me in this world. Is that not so?" He took both her hands, and looked down into her glowing face.

"You have no right—you should not speak so," she said, trembling beneath his passionate gaze. "Listen to me, Violet. You have not asked me why I was telegraphed for from Yorkshire."

"No; why?" she said indifferently.

"My cousin, Sir Henry Barrington, has been killed in a railway accident."

"What has that to do with me?"

"Everything, since his only son was killed with him!"

"Kit! and you?"

"And I am Sir Christopher Barrington, at your service, Violet. I am not such a rich man as Lennard; but I am fairly well off, and Welby is a nice old place. I should not have ventured to ask you again to marry a poor man, but I do ask you again now. I know you thoroughly, Violet. I know you to be worldly and ambitious. I know you are too selfish to marry anyone who cannot give you every luxury and every comfort; but, in spite of your faults, I know that you love me with your whole heart, and—and—I want you, child; I can't live without you. I know you thoroughly, and yet I love you. You smothered your best feelings when you refused me and accepted Lennard. I believe that if you will throw him over and have me, the best part of you will revive; and you know," he added with a smile, "you would like to be Lady Barrington!"

It was the strangest wooing, but with Violet it answered perfectly; even the last paltry inducement of being "my lady" told on her, as Kit well knew that it would.

"You are not very complimentary to my character," she said with a pretty pout, which he kissed away.

"Come out into the garden, or the shore, or somewhere, I can't talk here," said Kit presently, and they went out together down to the sand heaps and sat down there.

"Kit, I can't think how I am to marry you; what will be said of me? How shall I ever write to David Lennard? How shall I ever tell your aunt? what will she say after all her kindness?"

"Why tell them at all? why not marry me quietly, and tell them afterwards?" he said.

"But my father would never consent."

They were both silent for a minute, and then Violet exclaimed joyfully—

"I have it! a splendid idea! I told you that neither my father nor anyone here has ever seen David Lennard; why should you not pass for him? I will introduce you to my father as David, and you will tell him that he must marry us quietly here; you can make out some important family reasons for secrecy, and then we can go abroad. And isn't it illegal to marry anyone under a wrong name? because then we might go straight to Paris, and be married over again. There!"

"My dear child, what a mad idea!"

Kit looked at her almost with amazement; he could hardly believe her to be in earnest, but she was perfectly serious.

"It is giving up a great deal for you, Kit, so don't make absurd difficulties. Only think of the gay wedding I was to have had! And oh! my *trousseau*!" And at this thought the tears welled up into her eyes. "Oh! Kit, I forgot the *trousseau*. I don't think I could possibly give that up."

"Oh, as to that, you shall buy everything and anything you like in Paris; I will give you *carte blanche*!"

Her face brightened at once.

"Oh, that will be charming! and much better fun than getting the things in London."

"But, Violet," he said, hardly knowing if she

was really bent on this extraordinary plan or not "I don't think I can consent to pass myself off as Lennard; I am not good at acting—and suppose he were to turn up here."

"You need not act much; you must go away by the afternoon coach that catches the six o'clock train to-day, and not come back till the day before we are married. I will manage it all with my father, if you are afraid of it. As to David, I promise you he shall not come, for I will write and tell him I am going away from home for a fortnight. Hush! say no more; here comes my father!"

And, before he could utter another remonstrance, Mr. Clayton, who had been informed by the grinning Martha that "Miss Violet's young gentleman" had arrived, came rapidly towards them, with outstretched hands.

"It is Mr. Lennard, papa!" murmured Violet, with downcast eyes and a becoming blush.

"My dear Mr. Lennard, I am most delighted to welcome you—of course you will stay with us to-night?"

"Unfortunately, papa, he is obliged to go back to town by the six o'clock train; he only came down for a little talk with me about which I will tell you by-and-by."

Kit was looking very awkward and shy; but Mr. Clayton was not observant, and his future son-in-law's constrained manner did not attract his attention.

By this time they were walking up towards the house, and Violet hanging back a little, said in a low voice to her lover as they passed into the garden—

"It is too late now, the deed is done; you must make the best of it!"

Thus, false to the last, Violet Clayton was actually married to the man whom she really did love with as much love as her shallow heart was capable of. How she got round her father satisfactorily to persuade him to consent to such a sudden and secret marriage was what he himself afterwards could never quite make out. But in the end he did consent, and within ten days he married her to the man he believed to be David Lennard. The happy couple started for Dover, where, being armed with a special license, made out this time in Kit's own name, they were remarried the following morning in time to start by the morning boat to Calais.

Lady Barrington then wrote immediately to her godmother a very touching and pathetic letter, in which she put forth at some length her self-reproach and misery at having treated David Lennard so badly. "But," she wrote, "I never loved him, it was the temptation of his money and his position which turned my head and made me accept him; but thank God," she added piously, "I was mercifully saved from marrying a man I did not love when my heart belonged to another! Dear Kit, who would never have ventured to propose to me as long as he was a poor man, came at once on his change of fortune and confessed his affection for me, and persuaded me to deceive my dear father and you all; you will break it to poor David, won't you, for me? for I really shrink from writing to him myself, and I do believe that he will marry dear Janet and be much happier than with worthless naughty little

me? Dearest aunt, don't be very angry with me please, try to forgive me: I should be so miserable if you were to be really very angry with your good-for-nothing but most affectionate and loving little god-daughter—VIOLET."

It was a very clever letter, and there was sufficient truth in it to make it read like a very genuine confession of happiness tempered by regret, and in time Mrs. Barrington did forgive her lovely and penitent "little runaway," as she called her, whilst David Lennard forgave her too, and thanked his stars devoutly for the narrow escape which he rightly considered himself to have had. After a time, when he had recovered the shock to his self-esteem which Violet's conduct had caused him, Mr. Lennard, now grown a sadder and a wiser man, went back to his allegiance, and very humbly and penitently he prayed Janet Maxwell to forgive his backsliding and to restore him to his former place in her favour. And Janet did so. Each by this time had learned something of the worth of a genuinely true and honest character, and both had suffered somewhat from the bitterness of trust betrayed and of an ideal degraded and brought low. And so, somehow or other, these two whose lives had been for a time so nearly sundered for ever came together again once more with a deeper affection and a more sincere mutual appreciation than either of them had ever felt before. And their marriage turned out happily. In the peaceful calm of a country life, in tastes and pursuits which they shared together, and in the possession of children who became a sweet and secure link of their parents' love, it would be perhaps difficult in all England to find a more devoted couple than Mr. and Mrs. David Lennard, nor would any of their more recent acquaintances ever be likely to believe that so happy a marriage had been brought about by any other cause save that of a great true love between two persons most eminently suited to each other.

As to Sir Christopher and Lady Barrington, they took up their abode in London, where everything at first went well with Violet. She was young, beautiful, and rich; she became fashionable and popular; she had everything which her frivolous little soul had longed after—carriages and horses, jewellery, and luxury; she had her box at the Opera, her monster receptions, her faultless little dinners; she was to be seen, in every crowd of pleasure seekers, in every scene of gaiety and dissipation, and always she was courted and flattered and sought after. Surely she had fulfilled the ambition of her youth. She had gained her "Heart's Desire!" And then one day there came a great and terrible change, and all the world grew dark and dreary to her. And this is how it came about.

Violet fell ill. She was stricken down by a short but sharp illness; it was indeed nothing worse than a malignant type of measles, but it worked a terrible change in her. By some evil luck, Violet rose from those three weeks of sickness to find that her beauty had deserted her—her complexion was ruined!

And Kit's love did not survive this trial of its worth. He had loved his wife for her face, and her face had been robbed of its freshness, and the peculiar and delicate type of its loveliness had been spoilt for ever! He could not forgive her. His passion, that had been fed by her beauty and

was unsupported by any true esteem for a character which from the first he had known to be shallow and worthless, died as suddenly as it had been born. Kit tired of her. He neglected her more and more, and sought distraction and amusement in the society of others who pleased his wandering taste more than the pale sickly looking woman who was his wife. And is a wife ever happy who sees herself fade slowly and surely out of her husband's heart, eclipsed in his fancy by younger and fresher faces? It was gall and wormwood to her. One thing indeed might have arrested his waning love. Most eagerly and passionately Kit longed for a son to inherit his name and property—and Violet had no child. After a time he grew first angry and then cold and bitter to her because this great desire of his soul was denied to him. And the knowledge that she was the innocent cause of his disappointed hopes preyed upon Violet's temper and spirits until the domestic peace of the already estranged couple became utterly ruined.

She became irritable and soured; all the gay throng of admirers and flatterers who had once surrounded her fell away from the woman whose beauty had perished, and whose charm of manner had succumbed to the trials of her life. A jealous, miserable, discontented woman!—that was what Violet Barrington became, and what was the end of all her ambitions and worldly schemes?

So, falling more and more apart, the years go on, leaving the husband still upright and handsome and popular, still smiled upon by beautiful faces, still welcomed gladly by siren sweet voices—whilst the wife, with faded beauty and vanished popularity, is prematurely aged, and bears upon her once lovely, but now worn and unattractive, face the stamp of a perpetual wretchedness. After all perhaps it had not been worth her while to be false and treacherous and worldly. For the desires of our hearts if they are sordid and base are apt, when they are granted to us, to turn into bitterness beneath our grasp, and the golden apples which we covet are transformed too often into dust and ashes between our teeth.

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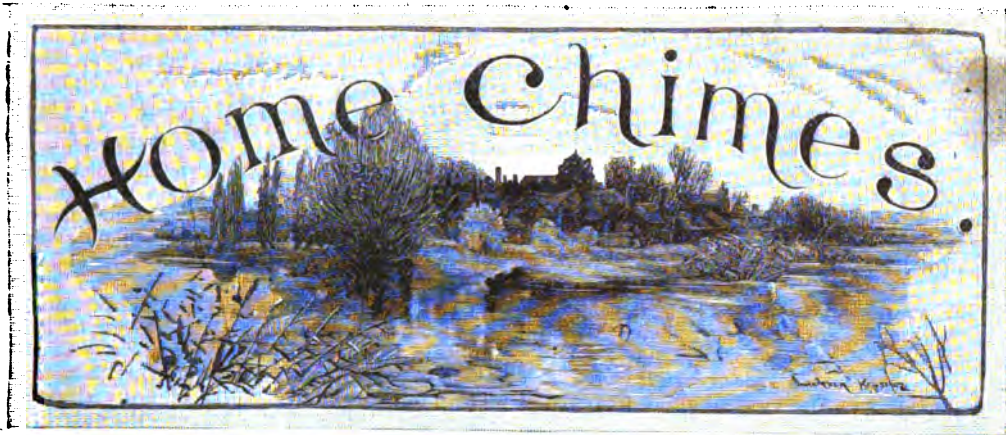
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 12.]

LONDON: MARCH 21, 1885.

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THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. P. THEED.

CHAPTER I.

THE WILLOW FARM.

A SAD story in a degree—a strange story in a still greater degree—a story that covers a long space of time—that would cover the lifetime of many who read it, for it dates from a bleak night in December twenty years ago, when I found myself (being at that time thirty years old, and having been some ten years “on the road”) the only passenger, save one, outside the coach running between certain of the principal towns in the West Riding of Yorkshire. We were within a couple of miles of our destination, and glad I was to hear it, for the cold intensified every moment, and it was so dark it was almost impossible, even with the aid of the lamps, to see any distance before us.

“Nice night for a poor devil to have to find his way home in, ain’t it?” observed my companion, speaking for the first time, as he tightened the comforter round his throat, and turned in my direction what little left visible of a shrewd, middle-aged face, weather beaten at all times, and now, of course, bluer and redder than ever with the fresh exposure it was undergoing. “Black as pitch, and as I never thought of a lantern at *my* end, I’ll be blest if they will at their’s!”

“You don’t go on to R— then to-night?” I inquired, and as I spoke I looked round involuntarily for some sign of a human habitation—ever such a faint flicker of light in the dense darkness, and saw none. My fellow traveller evidently saw what I was after, and gave vent to a contemptuous chuckle.

“Not a bit of it,” he growled. “Didn’t I tell you so? They’d leave me to break my neck

amongst ‘em before they’d go a foot’s length out of their way, confound ‘em!”

He used a stronger term than that I remember—stronger than I care to reproduce—and there was a bitterness in his way of speaking which removed what he said quite out of the sphere, so to say, of ordinary grumbling. I recollect thinking I did not envy those to whom he was going home that night.

“No,” he continued presently, as if he suddenly remembered the question I had put to him, “I am not going to R—. The next turning we come to is *my* turning. There’s a short cut that would take me home in seven minutes, but groping all the way round by the road on a night like this, heaven only knows when I shall get there—if I ever get there at all. You can’t see the house,” he added, “till you are close upon it. It lies right down in the hollow—worse luck to it.”

It was evident that the house was wrong—everything was wrong—that night. Was it always so? I wondered; or was the man’s present exasperation only the result of the dark night, and his undissembled horror of facing it?

“You would be glad of a light to guide you to it to-night, no doubt,” I observed propitiatorily; “but, take it as a rule, I should think you are a good deal better off down there than you would be up here. The wind is enough to cut you in two, and when the snow comes—ugh! I shiver at the thought of it”—and I did shiver. I suited the action to the word, without any effort whatever. I would not have promised to live, in the dead of winter, rent free in the finest house anybody could have given me out on the Yorkshire moors at that moment.

“Well, when the snow comes, what then?” he asked, with that low, grating laugh of his. “You don’t suppose we escape it down there? We escape nothing, and we’re safe from nothing—except the sun!”

After giving me this cheerful impression of his home, he relapsed into a silence, which I did not attempt to break; and the brief remainder of our

journey together would, I think, have been accomplished without further speech on either side, but for the sudden appearance of a light—for which I am sure he had been eagerly watching all the time—a couple of hundred yards to the right of us.

"You have been better remembered than you expected—I won't say than you deserved to be," I remarked with a laugh. "They have sent somebody for you with a lantern, after all. I wish you a safe walk home and a good fire at the end of it."

"If that were all that would be at the end of it, it wouldn't hurt," he retorted gruffly. "Wait till you've a place of your own, with such a — sulky face. No, don't! Wait for ever! Do without it for ever, rather! There—good-night to you, and good luck!"

So, with a sort of rough good nature in these last words and in his way of saying them, which was utterly inconsistent with the rest of his words and the rest of his manner, and with a sudden grip of the hand, which was equally unexpected, he exchanged "good-nights" with the driver, got down from the coach, and, by-and-by, vanished into the darkness, in the direction whither the approaching light—now not very from us—guided him.

Those parting words of his were the last words I remember hearing—as his is the last face I remember seeing—to take any note of it—whose it was or whence it came—for many a weary day and night to come. I never knew exactly—I don't fancy anybody ever did know—how it happened; but within a very few minutes, as I believe, of our putting down our fellow-passenger, I heard a sudden sharp oath from the box, followed by a plunge and a crash—and, on my part, a general sensation that the world was coming to an end, which, as far as I was individually concerned, it must have been within an ace of doing—a sensation which left me, almost as soon as it came, bereft of feeling and consciousness of any kind, lying—as I came to know afterwards—face downwards in the ditch by the roadside. Whether one of the horses took fright—as I believe was said to have been the case—at a white cow, which crossed its path suddenly in the dark, or whether the driver—like most of his class, a very good whip when he was "all there"—had taken a drop too much, and so was labouring under a double difficulty—mattered little then to any of us, who were the sufferers on the occasion, the mischief done being the same anyhow, and matters less now. The fact remains that there was a very bad accident, and that I owed it—under Providence—to my fellow-passenger of that night, and to the friendly light of the lantern, for which we had both watched and waited, that I am here to-day to tell the tale.

It was under his roof, in the house in the hollow, I came back once more to the consciousness that I was alive. Alive and awake in a strange bed, in a strange room; not that these unfamiliar surroundings troubled or perplexed me even then, as they would have done quiet, stay-at-home people, unaccustomed to gad about the world as my calling compelled me to do. It was not often that I slept more than a couple of nights together in the same place, and no small proportion of the country inns, at which I was in the habit of putting up, afforded accommodation no less

primitive and old-fashioned than that which had fallen to my lot at the Willow Farm. Yet, though about my new quarters there was nothing in any way remarkable, there was not, I believe, a single thing in the room, from the huge china parrots, which flanked the high wooden mantel-piece, up to the spindle-shanked four poster, in which I came to myself, of which I do not retain a distinct recollection. It was a medium sized room, low and a little dark, being lighted by a single high-cased window, and rendered still duller and more dismal than it would otherwise have been by the dingy drab of the paper hangings and curtains. If you had been going to make a drawing of it (an unlikely thing, I grant you, for anybody to do or think of doing), you would have done it in sepia. There were drabs and browns of every degree of dinginess in it and about it, and the only bit of warm colouring—brown still—that was to be found amongst them was confined to the old "knee-hole" dressing-table, which was at once the best-looking and most commodious article of furniture in the room. Upon this—how well I remember it all, and so I ought, for in the course of twenty years I can recall no change in it!—stood a high, narrow mirror in a narrow rosewood frame—a mirror, one glance in which would have sufficed to put fair Rosamond herself out of conceit with her own reflection—and above it hung, framed and glazed, the most melancholy achievement in the way of needlework I ever remember to have seen—a frightfully realistic counterfeit of the tomb of my host's grandmother—a virtuous old lady, who had departed this life at the ripe age of eighty-six. Such was the scene—if I may be allowed to call it such—of my convalescence—and upon which—on a slow fire, burning lazily in the grate, and a woman sitting in an arm-chair by the side of it, busily engaged on some white work which I know now was for bandages and was for me—my eyes opened.

I said just now you might have drawn the room and everything in it in sepia. I was not thinking of her when I said so, but now that I do think of her, I don't retract, and I don't make any exception. No tints but neutral tints could have given a correct idea of her face, her dress, her general appearance. One day—not so very long after—one day when she wanted to amuse me, poor soul! and so brought out, one by one, her little treasures to show me, she produced a miniature of herself, painted by some not unskilful hand. Ah! me—the lilies and the roses—the blue of the eyes and the soft gold of the hair! To think what a bright bit of light and colour she would have made then in the room, to the dull uniform tint of which the years and the burden they had brought with them had so faded and toned her down! And a heavy burden it must have been, for the years, after all, had not been so many. She could not have been more than seven or eight and thirty—if she was so much—this woman with the sad pale face and the slight drooping figure, whom I saw thus for the first time employed in my service—whom I was to see so constantly day and night for a long time to come, longer than I could have borne the thought of, had I been able to foresee it—always similarly occupied, always in one way or another ministering to my necessities and providing for my comfort, patient, gentle, indefatigable, from first to last.

Some slight motion of mine—I was too weak to speak—recalled her attention to me, and she rose and came to my bedside, with a sudden startled look in her eyes, which changed, as she stood there, to a faint pleased smile.

"It is all right," she said, in a low, pleasant voice that was younger than her face. "You are getting well fast, but you must not talk. Keep quiet and rest, and don't think—don't try to think. It will all come back to you, by-and-by."

She was quite right. By degrees it all did come back to me, up to the moment when I was pitched off the coach and ceased to be aware of anything. I remembered that long, seemingly interminable drive in the cold and the dark; the bitter, relentless nor-easter, which threatened to benumb us as we sat; the gradually deepening darkness and the one speck of light, not much bigger than that of a glow-worm, which shone out of it, at last—and then, last of all, I remembered the man! As the keen eyes, peering out of the blue cold of his face, flashed back on my mind, and the short, jerky sentences, with their unreasonable anger against everything and everybody, found an echo once more in my brain, my sense of the ridiculous, touched by the remembrance as it had been by the reality, found vent in a weak attempt at a laugh.

"Better, ain't he? Sounds like coming to himself, don't it, when he begins to cackle like that? No need of any of *you* to tell a man that, clever as you think yourselves—ah, doctor?"

It was the same voice, gruff still, but with the bitterness gone out of it, which had been ringing in my head a moment before. As yet I had not come to the knowledge of where I was, and I uttered a cry of surprise, as the curtain, close to my head, was drawn cautiously aside, and the face, to which the voice belonged, divested of the wrappings, which had impeded my full view of it, on the only other occasion on which I had seen it, appeared in startling proximity to my own. Not such a bad face, after all—shrewd and hard, with the sharp, suspicious expression in the eyes still there—*always* there—and with as resolute a mouth and as square a cut of jaw as ever I saw in a human face. Still, not a bad face—not mean or crafty or cruel—hard, indeed, but honest in its hardness. For the rest, a man of middle age—from forty-five to fifty—neither tall nor short, but square-built and thick-set, and clad as became his calling—that of a simple North-country farmer, with no pretension to gentle birth and breeding, and without the shadow of a wish to assert any.

"Well," regarding me with a not unkindly amusement, "so you know me; do you? Better again, ain't it?" he added, with a certain triumph in his voice as he turned to his companion. "Pull through now, won't he? No fear of him?"

"Fear of him! Of course not. Who ever thought of fear of him?" said the other briskly, with a nod which was duly appreciated afterwards in the quarter it was not intended for. "But what says the nurse? Come, Mrs. Merritt, you are the authority, you know. What have you to say of your patient?"

At the mere mention of her name—his own name—the man's face changed. The transient expression of pleasure and interest with which he had regarded the poor wreck of humanity—for a wreck;

to all intents and purposes, I must have appeared then!—which Providence had cast upon his mercy, died out of it suddenly and completely as he stood there, and left in its stead a sort of dogged defiance, as much as to say, "Say what you like and do what you like! I am ready for you!"

Involuntarily my eyes wandered from his face to hers. As far as anything human that had life in it at all, and was not positively vacant, could lack expression of any kind, hers lacked it. She looked as if she neither saw nor heard. What I noticed in them then, seeing them thus together for the first time, I noticed in them ever after. The effect produced upon them by each other's society then was the effect produced upon them always; one look in her face seemed to arouse in him a world of angry feeling; one tone of his voice seemed to petrify in her, for the time being, all feeling of what sort soever. What her reply was to the doctor I never knew. Their faces and their voices faded softly away, back into the silence in which I had lain so long, and I was only dimly conscious once of the surgeon's light hand on my head as he changed the bandage, and—to use his own expression—made me comfortable.

You will wonder was there nobody belonging to me to come and look after me? If there had been, I do not suppose I should ever have had this story to tell. If I had had father or mother, sister or brother, to help nurse me in this sickness and to relieve these strangers of the burden of it, as soon as it was safe to remove me at all, my connection with them, as it would never have become so intimate, would never have lasted so long, and would most certainly never have survived—as it *did* survive—their lives here. But I was as much alone in the world—as far as family ties are concerned—as a man could be. I had no relatives near enough to care whether I lived or died, and, stranger still for a single man, in the prime of his life, I had no sweetheart. There had been somebody once. I looked back to her already as I looked back to my childhood, to which, indeed, she belonged, as to something too beautiful and too pleasant ever to be recalled—a delight in the past, with which nothing the future might have in store could ever compare.

I had not even at that time the home I was lucky enough to find, a couple of years later, in the house of one of my comrades on the road—so that not even at that one hearth—humble and hospitable then—now, thanks to honest labour and to the blessing of God, which rests upon it—less humble but not less hospitable—was there any chair waiting for me to fill it, any friendly heart disquieting itself on my account. With that one friend, without which in our pocket we are apt to fare badly indeed, my employers, the best friends I had in the world, kept me well supplied; but there are, as we all know and must thankfully acknowledge, certain things which money cannot buy, certain doors which are not to be opened with the silver key; and of these are such care and kindness and hospitality, such tender and indefatigable nursing, as fell to my share at the Willow Farm.

They had me there on their hands more than six weeks—into the Christmas holidays, as I well recollect, for with them there came into the house, not before it was wanted, a new element. I have

often wondered how these two, husband and wife, supported the life they must have led, when they were left through the long, dreary winter evenings with no company but that which it was easy to see was worse than none—that of each other. Often and often the thought that the mere fact of my presence there, though it added, to an extent nobody was so well aware of as myself, to the cares and occupations of the unhappy mistress of the house, gave to her monotonous life an interest and a variety it would otherwise have lacked, checked my own impatience at the length of my sojourn under their roof and my enforced inactivity. At first I was puzzled to think how her place was filled downstairs so as to leave her time so much at my disposal. But after awhile, when I was myself able to leave my room and lie on the sofa in the Stone Parlour, by which quaint name the ordinary living room of the family, opening as it did out of the big farm kitchen, was familiarly known, I saw more and understood better how small a place the farmer left for his wife's occupation, even in what one would have held to be exclusively her province. He was himself at the beginning and ending of everything, and under him—for it point of fact it was he who kept house—there was an elderly servant woman called Mattie, who cooked and scolded and cleaned, and who, without being disrespectful to her mistress, it was evident had fallen into the way of regarding her very much as she might have done a visitor who had no voice whatever in the house. How had it all come about, I used to wonder! Had it ever been any better? Better it must have promised to be once, or she could never have married him. Yet sad as her life was, she never even indirectly complained of it. It was a very quiet spot, she said, and they knew very few people; they did not belong, either of them, to that part of the country, and they had not cared to make acquaintances. More than twelve years they had lived there, and the farm, which had been left to her husband by a bachelor uncle of his, had doubled in value since it came into his hands. She supposed they should stay there always.

"But you must find it very dull," I said to her once. "Surely you don't remain here all the year round? You go away sometimes?"

"I have been away," she answered simply. "The child had the measles three years since, and the doctor sent us both to the seaside for change of air; that was the last time. But I don't care about going"—with a faint flush rising to her face—"I do very well here; I am used to it."

"Used to it!" I echoed. "I should die of it; at least" (for I suddenly remembered how rude a speech I was making), "you know what I mean—to any one used to going about."

"It must seem very dreadful," she said gently. "I can quite understand that; but I never went about much—not even before I was married; and now I never think of it. It is so much better, is it not, to learn not to look forward or fret—just to take things as they come? I used to worry about things once, I don't now. It will all cease to matter before long, for all of us, you know."

"It will and I won't," I objected. "We are all bound to make the best of our lives, and to be as happy as we can. It is a thanksgiving we owe to God."

She raised her meek eyes to mine, and looked at

me steadily with an expression in which a sort of wondering pity predominated.

"You are quite right," she said, with gentle dignity. "But it is so hard for us to judge each other. It is possible we might do a great deal better in one another's places, but there is no telling. And, my dear, you don't know my life, and I don't know yours—God knows!"

I think that was the only time and that the only way in which I ever heard her assert herself. I had not meant to be harsh or to wound her, Heaven knows. How could I tell what it had cost her to attain to that dead level of resignation? But then it did not seem to me so much resignation as despair. It is difficult at times to tell where one ends and the other begins.

She talked very little even of the child to whose illness she had been indebted for that rare holiday. Of the two, Merritt was decidedly the better company. There was a certain dry humour about him, and he would tell a good story with a relish which showed a keen sense of the ridiculous. In his way, too, he had amassed a good deal of information of all sorts, and had not been slow to supplement it by observation, as far as opportunity had served him. In past years, I found from his conversation, it had done so more than it was ever likely to do again. He had begun life by running away to sea, and had spent some of his best years in Australia; had married out there for the first time, and lost his wife on the way home—and a good wife she was, he added—a sight too good, for after he lost her he could not rest until he had filled her place, and God knew (with an indescribable bitterness) how he had filled it!

There had been one child, it seemed, by that first marriage, a son, who was—as his father pithily expressed it—"no good," and was somewhere, he did not know where, in foreign parts. (Evidently Mr. Merritt had not the knack of getting on with his family.) "And then," he added, with an odd change in his voice—which, Heaven help him! I did not understand then, but do now, with the whole of that sad story in my possession—"And then there is Phillis—her child."

"Yes," I said; "she told me—your wife told me—of your little girl."

"Our little girl!" he said sneeringly. "Well, she is a rare pretty one; there's no call to be ashamed of her looks anyhow. But you will see for yourself. She'll be home for the holidays come Christmas, and that is pretty near now. You will see for yourself."

Well, Christmas came, and she came, and I did see for myself. Her father was right. She was a "rare pretty one;" prettier than at fifteen than ever after; for she was one of those girls who develop early, and hers was, moreover, what the French call *beauté du diable*—rather that of colouring and expression than of feature. She was her mother over again, as she was depicted in the miniature she had shown me; but it was difficult to believe that to Rachel Merritt there could ever have belonged a tenth part of the life and spirit—the apparently inborn irrepressible joyousness which characterised her daughter. Her presence did away, as if by magic, with the indescribable dulness of the house; her gay voice carolled its snatches of song up and down the stairs—in and out of the rooms—as though music

and merriment came as naturally there as elsewhere; her girlish laughter rippled out as spontaneously as though laughter were not a thing almost unknown there! She was so bright in herself that this brightness of hers got the better of all the gloom that was opposed to it, and ended by communicating itself, more or less—I was going to say to *all* of us—I should rather say to Merritt and myself—not to her mother. The gaiety had been crushed out of her too completely; and yet I do not know which was the fonder and prouder of the girl in reality of those two, between whom, it seemed to me then, she ought to have made such a bond as would have broken down for ever the barrier which rose between them. But the man's mood with regard to her varied, I observed, as the woman's never did. His eyes would follow her every movement one moment with a tenderness in them which startled you by its intensity; and the next he would surprise you still more by the sudden harshness of his voice and manner, as he requested some trifling service, or openly resented the omission of it, at her hands. It was as if he were ashamed of his very affection for her and indignant with himself for it. Whatever it originated in, this capriciousness of his took little effect upon her. She was gay and good-tempered at all times, and seemed as little softened by any extraordinary manifestation of attachment upon his part as sobered by any unwonted asperity. At that time of her life she was, I should say, fond of them both, after a simple, childish fashion, which questioned neither the extent of her love for them nor of theirs for her, but took and gave as a simple matter of course.

We were very great friends—she and I. By the time she made her appearance amongst us I was far advanced on the high road to recovery, and the greater part of the day I spent with the two—mother and daughter—in the Stone Parlour. Very often, though—more often than not—we had the room to ourselves, Phillis and I, and I think we liked it better. I hesitate to say it, she was so good to me and I owed her so much; but I fancy we both felt a weight taken off our spirits when she left us. We were young—though I was, of course, very much older than Phillis—and I suppose we liked to forget, to be allowed to forget, the suffering and sorrow that were in the world, and of these Stephen Merritt's wife was a perpetual reminder.

"Do you know who mother puts me in mind of?" the girl asked suddenly one day when we were thus left to ourselves. "Shall I tell you? That king in the history of England—Henry the First, was it not?—who never smiled again after he had lost his son. That was a very good reason. I wonder has mother any reasons half as good? She must have some, I should think. One of these days I shall ask her," she added flippantly.

"No you won't, Phillis. You'll take it for granted there has been too good a cause for that grave face of hers. It would not do for every one to be as great a magpie as you. You can do talking and laughing enough for all of us."

"I think you would be in a bad way without me," she retorted. "But tell me, did you ever know any people quite like us, before you came here—people who never went to parties or had any fun of any sort? You should hear some of the girls at school—the dances they were going

to and the number they were going to have in the house! And then there were to be Christmas trees, and church decorations, and all sorts; very different to the way we go on here. Every day the same, breakfast and dinner, and tea and supper, and never anything to make a change. Do you think it will always be like that when I am grown up?"

"How can I tell you?" I answered uneasily. "It is not winter all the year round, remember, and in the summer a country life is so much pleasanter, and people can get about and drive about, and it is so much easier to see something of your neighbours. Besides, Phillis," I added artfully, "there will not always be a sick man in the way of everything and everybody."

I said it because it gave me a loophole of escape out of the difficulty I found in answering her, but I had not given her credit for the sensitiveness which filled her blue eyes with sudden tears as they encountered mine.

"That is most unkind of you," she said; "I shall miss the sick man very much when I come home in the summer, and you know too, quite well, that whether you were here or not, it would not have made the slightest difference. There would not have been any more going on than there has been."

But for the few words which passed between us on that occasion I should not have known that she appreciated—much less that she resented the tameness of her home life. She was so bright a disposition, as I have said before, that I think she very rarely thought of it; and had her mother only been more like herself, she would, I believe, have made herself perfectly happy without any of those coveted delights of which such glowing pictures had been drawn by her schoolfellows. What was to be expected, however? If they meant her to lead the life of a recluse, why, in the name of all that is pitiful, had they ever sent her away from them?

I don't remember that anybody—any woman or girl or child (an occasional farmer there was of course) came there all the time I was in the house. I know that my time to go came before Phillis's, and that to the kind words spoken, when that day came by the farmer and his wife—words which my heart was too full for me to make any audible answer to, they had been so wonderfully good to me—she added her own pretty regret that I was leaving before she left, and her hope that when she returned at Midsummer she should find me there again.

They had said the same thing to me, both of them. When my duty brought me, as it would bring me, again into these parts, it was to them I was to come, and with them I was to stay. Was it possible that I could ever willingly lose sight of them, after all that had been done for me?

Twice every year—summer and winter—I was in the habit of stopping at R—, then as now, a rather important centre of the business in connection with which I travelled. I shall never forget the welcome I met with at the Willow Farm the first June after my introduction to it. I can see now the light upon Phillis's face as she stood in the porch in her pretty clean-looking gown—white it was, I remember, with little lilac spots dotted all over it, and at her neck a lilac riband—the freshest, most delicate colour in the wide world! A little

taller and fuller and altogether more womanly; but with the old child smile on her lips, the old laughter in her eyes, the same bright, happy, innocent creature I had left behind me in the winter.

They were all three glad to see me, but she was enchanted. She would have welcomed anything or anybody coming to break the monotony of her daily life—and me she liked. I wonder at myself sometimes that I did not think more of her liking at the time; that I did not fan the flame on my own side—for I was conscious of a certain tenderness for her all the time—but there were a good many things to be considered: first and foremost, her extreme youth and inexperience, and the very little I saw of her, after all, at that or at any time after my first visit. And then, as I said before, there had been somebody else not so very long ago, and hers was a place I was shy of filling, which I thought then I never could fill.

I used to think of Phillis, too, in the intervals between those half-yearly meetings of ours, and wonder whether I should return some day to find that somebody, surer of his mind than I, had taken a fancy to her and put her for ever out of my reach; but she was a woman of twenty before my anticipations in that way were realized.

It was in the winter. I came upon the two together, I remember, at the very corner at which the coach had come to grief five years before. It was close upon four o'clock in the afternoon, and so dusk it was all but dark; but I was expected at the Farm, and the girl knew me, and spoke to me at once.

"I am so glad," she said when we had exchanged greetings. "I told them I should come and meet you. Father would have fetched you in the gig, if you had let him know when. George, this is Mr. Francis you have heard so much of—and—and——"

Did my eyes ask who "George" was, that she turned away, blushing and stammering, from me to him, and putting her hand on his arm, and so, drawing him a little towards me in the fast fading light, added shyly: "And this is a neighbour of ours—at least his mother is a neighbour of ours—George Lawrence."

(To be continued.)

THE LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS.

HOW shall I crown my lady fair?—
How choose a dewy wreath
Of sweetest flowers to best declare
The charms that in her breathe—
The living charms of form and mind,
In happy harmony combined—
How shall I choose this wreath?

See yon voluptuous roses grow
In fragrant beauty rare;
These shall I twine on her pale brow,
O'ershadowed by her hair.
Her faultless beauty they'll proclaim,
While failing sadly in their aim
To match her beauty rare.

Or tulips * gay shall I prefer,
Whose varied tints surprise?
Their brilliant hues will ne'er compare
With her pure, radiant eyes—

* Beautiful eyes.

Now beaming love, now grave in thought,
Now tearful, by compassion taught,
Now filled with sweet surprise.

Or fragile yellow jasmine spray?†
Its elegance and grace
Are fittest emblems of her—say
Shall I to this give place?
The swan, as she doth proudly swell
Upon the lake,—the young gazelle,
Surpass her not in grace.

The plummy ferns,‡ in sylvan shade,
Possess the magic power
Of half-hid loveliness, afraid
Of noontide's garish hour;
These well will serve to mark the spell
She knoweth not, nor can I tell,
But own the secret power.

No. She has greater charms than these,
Which her perfection make.
The bluebells,§ nodding in the breeze,
And violets|| sweet I'll take,
To tell her constancy and truth,
Sweet in the freshest hours of youth:
These her perfection make.

And come, clematis,¶ I will twine
Thy tender leaves around
Her gentle head, where all divine
And human beauty's found;
Where every virtue is combined
In one fair, pure, and gentle mind,
That sheds its light around.

GEORGE DAVIES.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN.

IT seems rather strange that whilst *She Stoops to Conquer* is still so effective and popular, the sister comedy from the same hand should have disappeared. And yet there is scarcely a character in Goldsmith's earlier piece which is not drawn on the broad lines of human nature, and therefore unaffected in its force by the lapse of time. Now, in the more favourite drama, *Tony Lumpkin* is a personage who no longer exists in society; and as the fun of him consists in the contrast between his position and his manners, it is difficult now, when no gentleman by birth behaves like a mere clown, to make him lifelike. In the *Good-natured Man*, Mr. Honeywood trembles occasionally on the contemptible, and Miss Richland is too stiff and didactic, but our modern tranquil manner of acting would modify matters. The other characters are excellent; Croaker would be most telling, and Mrs. Croaker who is only sketched, though well sketched, in the play, might be filled out by a competent actress to a highly amusing woman. The love characters, Olivia and Leontine, are easy and unaffected; Jarvis and Garnet are excellent servant portraits; the landlady is permissibly farcical; and as for Lofty, in the hands of an actor of great facial expression, such a one as Mr. John S. Clarke, it might be made a great hit. The plot is decidedly ingenious, and very fairly probable.

PAUL BENISON.

† Grace. ‡ Fascination. ¶ Mental Beauty.
§ Constancy. || Modesty.

THE TESTIMONY OF A DREAM.

BY THEO GIFT.

Author of "Pretty Miss Bellow," "A Matter of Fact Girl,"
 &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE DREAM.

IT was in the summer of the year 1876 that I happened to pass through the village of Crawley, in Sussex. I had never been there before; and my visit on that occasion was owing to the most prosaic and commonplace of reasons—that of finding country lodgings for my mother, my invalid sister, and myself during the month of August.

We did not want to go far away from London, partly on the score of expense, and partly on that of Lucy's spine which made travelling difficult; and as for the same reasons it was needful to take some trouble to secure lodgings which should be at once cheap, comfortable and prettily situated, I had volunteered for the work, and was out on that expedition accordingly.

In all households composed exclusively of women, with no male beings to lift life's heavier burdens from their frail shoulders, one of the number generally takes upon herself the duties of the "man of the house;" and in our family I was the one in question. Naturally, too; for mother was not young enough, and over-worn already, poor dear, by the cares and troubles of earlier years: while Lucy was too young and much too delicate; so I, the eldest girl, with plenty of health, strength and energy, was the one best fitted to fill the place of husband, son and brother to the other two. Lucy sometimes said of lover also; but who wouldn't have been that to her when one knew, looking at her poor white face and twisted back, that she could never have any other sort of lover of her own in this world. Ah, well, my Lucy, you have yours still, let other women chop and change as they please!

Crawley is on a side branch of the London and South Coast railway. Before starting from home mother had said to me, respecting the place I was to find: "It mustn't be more than thirty miles from London; nor an inn, because they are so noisy; and not dearer than fifteen shillings a week; and mind there is a sofa in the parlour, and if it could be a farm that would be best of all; but anyhow it mustn't be a place where you can't get plenty of fresh eggs and milk and butter; nor too relaxing, because Lucy wants bracing so much." all of which I had jotted down in my note-book in my own old maidishly methodical way. I little thought then what else that note-book would have in it before my return.

I had tried Balcombe first, a pretty little village near beautiful scenery, but where the hills were far too steep for Lucy to get any exercise at all; and then had come back to Three Bridges, a less picturesque place and flat enough, but too low and too near certain large patches of water and marsh to be bracing in any way; and had walked on a mile and a half to Worth, a tiny hamlet on the edge of a forest, but where there was no accommodation to be had save the inn; so that when I trudged back

to Three Bridges I was pretty well tired out and no better off than I had been at the beginning. Then some one told me of Crawley, and as a train for there was due in about ten minutes I waited and got into it accordingly.

If you know Crawley you know that it is a large, scattered, well-to-do village, a sunny, breezy, picturesque enough spot, girdled round with corn-fields and verdure; and boasting two or three fine old inns, relics of the ancient coaching days when this village was one of the principal resting places on the road to Brighton. To one of these inns, a sharply gabled, half-timbered house, with quaint latticed windows bulging out over low doorways rich in antiquated carving, I repaired for refreshment and information; and was so liberally supplied with both that within half an hour I had not only engaged lodgings a little lower down in the pretty, rustic High Street, but was feeling fresher and in better trim than I had done a couple of hours previously.

It was then only a little past five in the afternoon, for I had started directly after breakfast so as to have plenty of time for my explorations, and there was no train for an hour; so, not being willing to pass the time at the hot, dusty station, I strolled leisurely past the pretty old church and along a sunshiny lane till, seeing a gate on one side opening into a meadow pleasantly shaded with trees, and with a large haystack in the middle, I went in, and having found a comfortable seat among a mass of fallen hay on the sheltered side of the stack, leant my head back, closed my eyes enjoyingly, and meaning only to rest and luxuriate in the sweet air and sunshine, fell asleep.

And now comes the strange part of my story, the part to which all these matter-of-fact and uninteresting details have been leading; though, indeed, I have purposely gone into them to show you, first, that I am no idle, romantic young lady, and, secondly, that on the occasion in question I was in no way excited, over-wrought, or agitated in any degree.

For while I slept I had a dream, a dream so real, so vivid, and yet so horrible and ghastly, that even at this distance of time I cannot look back on it without a sickening shudder.

I dreamt that I was sitting there under the haystack wide awake and gazing at some fallen logs at the other side of the field; and which, though not really visible from my present seat, I do dimly remember having noticed when I entered the meadow. As I watched them now, however, I became aware of a strange, black, rounded object just showing over the bole of the largest log. At first it seemed motionless; then it rose slowly, slowly, sinking back once or twice, until the whole disk was visible above the log, and I could see that it was the head of a man and that the face was turned towards me.

In the same moment a great, inexplicable terror came over me. I would have liked to rise, to hurry away, but it was not possible. I could not even stir. A weight of iron seemed to hold me down as effectually as though I had been nailed to the spot; and slowly, slowly as before, the man's neck and shoulders rose into view, then his body, until at last he stood upright, with one foot on the log, behind which he must have been lying, and his eyes strained and staring in my direction.

And now I became conscious of a new horror,

something so terrible, so loathsome that my flesh seemed to creep before it, and I would have shrieked aloud but for the deadly faintness which came over me. It was not at me the man was glaring so fixedly—not at me at all—but at *something behind me!* I was still leaning back against the roll of hay which had formed such a pleasant cushion for me when I sat down; and all of a sudden I knew—how I cannot tell—that this roll was not hay only, but the body of another man—a dead man hidden under a thin covering of it!

And the man who had hidden him was this very one with the dark, matted hair, and starting, straining eyes drawing nearer even as I gazed. And this dark, sticky stream, this streak of red, glutinous horror, stealing downwards and soaking through the straw was—God in heaven! the man was murdered! *murdered!* and this was the murderer creeping nearer and ever nearer with each labouring breath I drew!

I *tried* to shriek, to rise, to move, to lift a hand—in vain! I struggled till my throat seemed bursting and my heart-strings strained to cracking; and it was no good—none! I could only lie there like one dead too, or paralyzed, with my eyes fixed on the advancing murderer and my head on the lifeless body; the body which, in some strange dream fashion, I could see and take note of, even to the light summer clothes, whitened with dust and stained with ghastly streaks, in which it was dressed; the hands clenched and half filled with grass and gravel, as though in his death agony he had fallen forward clutching at the earth; the face—No! no, *not* the face! the—Heaven in pity keep my reeling brain!—the crushed, battered, nameless thing, which had been a face once but—I am going mad, mad—I cannot look any more.

A haze came over my dream for a moment, but when it cleared my senses only revived to a new horror. The murderer was now close to me, so close that he almost touched me. I could see his face distinctly, that of a young man, a total stranger to me, dark and dissipated-looking even through the pallor of hate and fear, with well-shaped features, and prominent, dark brown eyes, one of which was disfigured by a recent heavy bruise which had broken through the skin above it. I saw all this, I say, saw it as clearly as I saw that motionless form behind me; and yet at the same time I knew perfectly well that my eyes were closed, tightly closed, and if I could only keep them so, the man then watching me for a sign, a movement, the flicker of an eyelash, might pass on and leave me—pass without lifting that red right hand, which I now saw clutched a heavy walking stick. But I could not! I *tried*. My whole soul and body seemed stiffening with the agony of the effort; and yet—yet—in spite of it all, I felt my eyelids lifting; gleams of jagged dazzling light seemed fighting with that dark scowl before my dazed sight. The hand rose suddenly, and, with one loud piercing scream, I sprang up, flinging out both hands as if to ward off—

What? There was a wisp of hay lying on my breast, shaken perhaps off my face by the sudden start. My feet were a little cramped. The afternoon sun was shedding long rays of golden light across the quiet meadows. There was no one in sight, no living soul; nothing but a donkey which

had strayed into the field, and was cropping the short green grass in a distant corner. It was all a dream—a *dream*—Oh! thank God! nothing more; nothing but a stupid dream—and yet I was trembling still; trembling and almost sobbing with the horror of it: a horror so intense that not for kingdoms could I have stayed there a moment longer, or given one backward glance at that heavy mass of fallen hay, which even yet seemed to my shrinking gaze to bear some resemblance to the shape of a human form.

Like a hunted creature I fled from that pleasant, sunny field which had suddenly become so horrible to me, and never turned my head or drew breath till I had passed the bend in the road leading to it, and was in sight of the red roofs and friendly church tower of the village. By that time my good sense was returning to me. I could even stand still and laugh a little at the past terror. To be so frightened by a mere dream as to run like a child from the scene of it! Why, a child would have had more courage. If any one else had confessed to such absurdity how I should have laughed at them; and yet even while scolding and scorning myself in this way the mere thought of it all made me shudder still, and I was glad, on looking at my watch, to see that it was late enough to oblige me to hurry to catch my train. The prospect of returning to Crawley for our summer holiday had lost some of its charm for me, and even when in the train I was haunted by a memory of that dark, bruised face, with the awful stamp of detected crime on it staring into mine.

Of course this wore off before long. Indeed, by the time I had exchanged into the London train at Three Bridges it was fairly gone, and I could laugh with genuine amusement at my absurdity and weak-mindedness. The whole thing seemed clear enough now. I had fallen asleep in a cramped attitude; and that, with the unaccustomedness to a Londoner of sleeping at all in the open air, had produced the dream to which the wisp of hay blown downwards across my face had contributed the finale climax. Every one knows how a series of nightmares, seeming to take hours in action, can be produced by a single twinge of gout or a tap at the door. It is the commonest thing possible. So when I got home and gave mother and Lucy an account of my day's adventures I did not even mention the dream at all; and only when my sister was in bed, said in a half jesting mood—

"Mother, I think I'll share your room to-night, if you'll have me. I fell asleep under a haystack this afternoon while I was waiting for the train and indulged in such a horrible nightmare, or rather *day-mare*, all about murdered people and murderers, that I don't dare to sleep alone lest it should come back to me."

"Well, of all the silly girls!" said mother laughing. "What will the world come to if *you* get nervous, Mary?" But she let me sleep with her all the same, and we had no nightmares either of us.

I had forgotten all about mine by next day. It was a Saturday, and we were to go down to Crawley on the Monday, so there was plenty to do for all of us. Even Lucy had her hands full with little odds and ends of mending and sewing; and it was not till night-time, and she had gone to bed, that I had time to sit down for half an hour's

rest, or mother to open the *Evening Standard*, which, in the ordinary way, it was her great pleasure to read out to us in disjointed scraps at tea. On this occasion she was too tired to do more than glance over the contents in silence, and I had taken up a magazine and was similarly occupied, when I was startled by a sharp exclamation; and looking up saw that mother had dropped the sheet on to her lap, and was staring at me with such a shocked and bewildered expression that I asked hurriedly what was the matter. Had she come on the death of any one we knew? Mother shook her head.

"Not that we know. Oh, no, dear! But—but what were you saying about some dream of a murder you had at Crawley? Did you hear of it then while you were there? It is very unpleasant that such a shocking thing should happen in the place we have chosen to go too."

"What thing, mother? I have not heard anything. What do you mean?"

"Mean? Why this. Look for yourself. *Horrible Murder at Crawley, Sussex. Discovery of the victim's remains in a Haystack.* The words caught my eye the moment I opened—Why, Mary! Mary, child! What is the matter? Mary!"

I had sprung up, clutching the paper and reading over her; and then—then, as the meaning of the words entered my mind, I don't know what I did. I suppose I must have fainted. Poor mother! no wonder she was frightened.

Well, it was strange enough, horrible and inexplicable enough to shake even the strongest mind for a moment, although the information was no more than that contained in the few lines of small print allotted to "country news," in the pages of a London 'daily.' These simply said that some labourers going to work on the morning of the previous day had found the body of a man concealed under a heap of straw, near a stack in a meadow; the head and face being so terribly disfigured as to show that death had been the result of brutal violence; that they had communicated with the police; and that the body had been subsequently identified as that of a land agent named Gibbs. No trace of the murderer had as yet been discovered.

That was all; but if you had read it as I did, with every detail of that awful day-dream standing out fresh and vivid, as if written in letters of fire on your brain, is it any wonder, I ask you, if even a sensible, matter-of-fact young woman, one who had scarcely read a romance, and had never seen a melodrama or done a romantic act in her life, should have been simply stunned and overwhelmed for the moment by this ghastly verification of what at first sight seemed no mere dream, but a supernatural vision of something which had actually been?

My mother, however, would not hear of it in this light. When on recovering from the first effects of the shock I described to her, trembling and hiding my face in her sheltering arms, all that I have already told you of my dream in the meadow, and of the murderer's face, a face so imprinted on my memory that I could and did sketch it there and then for her, she would not even listen to me. She put her hand over my lips to silence what I was saying; and told me almost angrily, while she busied herself in mixing me a sleeping draught, that I was not even to think such horrible,

untrue imaginings; they were positively blasphemous.

It was her theory, and she tried hard to make me believe it, that the dream was the consequence not the *avant-courier* of the story told in the newspaper; that either at the inn or elsewhere the murder must have been discussed before me; and, even though I was not conscious at the time of listening to it, must have so far penetrated my brain as to produce the subsequent dream with the additions which a hot sun and tired body were very likely to induce.

"But mother, mother," I interrupted, holding her tightly still; for how could her reasoning be true, gladly as I would have accepted it. "Don't you see that the body was only found on Friday, and it was Thursday when I was there? How could I have heard what no one knew at the time?"

But mother would not listen.

"The paper says 'Friday,'" she observed scornfully, "but every one knows how inexact newspapers are, and in any case he must have been missed on the Thursday and his disappearance commented on. Mary, I won't let you indulge such fancies. You will be repeating them to Lucy next, or making yourself ill. Put them out of your head at once." And she went and got the Bible and read aloud to me—dear, good mother!—psalm after psalm till the opiate I had taken took effect, and I was sound asleep.

But even a mother's word cannot be always law; nor her sheltering love a shield against the tragic realities of life. "The Crawley Murder," as many people may remember now, became, from the very mystery attending it, a matter of public interest extending far beyond the few lines of print at first accorded to it. There was an inquest of course in the first place, and (I think) more than one arrest on suspicion, necessitating magisterial inquiries; which, though they only led to the discharge of the suspected parties, had the further effect of making every known fact in connection with the crime a matter of public property.

Briefly put they were these. The victim was, as I have said, a land agent going by the name of Gibbs, well known in certain circles as a professional betting-man; and of more than indifferent reputation. On the Wednesday evening of the week in question he had arrived in Crawley on a tricycle, had put up at the principal inn there for the night, and had sallied forth on foot after an early breakfast next morning for the purpose of inspecting some lots of land for building purposes in the neighbourhood of the village. From that errand he had never returned; but on the following morning some farm labourers going to their work discovered the body hidden in the way already described. *It was dressed in a light summer suit, and the face was so crushed and cut about as to be almost unrecognizable*; but that robbery had not been the motive of the murder was proved by the dead man's watch and purse being still on his person; while further investigations disclosed sundry stains and patches of blood on a heap of stones just outside a gate leading from the field into a narrow lane, and also on the same gate the mark of a hand, all of which suggested that the terrible deed had been done at that spot, and the body afterwards conveyed by the murderer to the place where it was hidden.

No sign or trace of the latter could, however, be

discovered; nor even any clue as to his probable identity. Medical evidence showed that the murdered man had been dead at least twenty-four hours before the body was discovered, in which case the deed must have been committed almost immediately after his leaving the inn, thus leaving a large margin of time for the criminal to make good his escape; and though from the character of the deceased it was more than probable that he was not without personal enemies, there was no evidence to connect any of these with the manner of his death; while the persons arrested on suspicion were of the ordinary tramp class, and in each case proved their innocence by an alibi.

The affair was a complete mystery, and like the Great Coram Street and Pimlico murders and many others, so remained. Indeed I may as well say at once and here, that by the public at any rate, no slightest clue to it was ever obtained.

We did not go to Crawley that year. To Lucy the mere report of a murder in that neighbourhood was sufficient reason for our staying away. Of my connection with it she never heard; and I believe my mother sent the landlady of the snug little lodgings I had so joyfully engaged a week's rent in lieu of our going there. Her great aim was to banish every memory of the place and the mystery overshadowing it from my mind; and to that end she forbade me ever to talk of it even to herself; and, regardless both of distance and expense, insisted on transporting us to Boulogne for our summer holiday as though by change of scene and nationality to blot out from my remembrance the too horrible picture which for a time had haunted it.

For my part I was only too glad to second her efforts. What good could it have done to the murdered man, or even to the cause of justice had I told the story here recorded to others? Who could convict a murderer on the evidence of a dream, or identify a face by the visionary figment of a nightmare? The whole affair was a mystery, a coincidence, nay, if you will, a series of coincidences, ghastly, unnatural, and incredible in the extreme; but not explainable by any light of common sense, and therefore to be forgotten as soon as might be.

And to forget it was my own earnest desire.

CHAPTER II. THE WILL.

ALL this that I have been telling you happened, as I think I said, in the summer of 1876; and, so quiet and uneventful was our life—mother's, Lucy's and mine—that during the next four years not one single thing occurred worth the trouble of either writing or reading. We changed our servant once, I think, in that time; and once—for a little while—a gentleman, the brother of a school-friend of mine, got into the habit of coming to see us every now and then, and walking back with us from church on Sundays. He was a very clever man, and kind, and used to lend me books; and I recollect that it was about then that mother took to extolling the healthiness of Holloway—albeit it might be unfashionable—over other parts of London, and declaring that I looked better and rosier every year. But this has nothing to do with

my story; and when he went away, as he was obliged to do—for he was a poor man, quite poor, earning about two pounds a-week as a science teacher, and some one sent him an offer of a resident mastership in a large provincial college, where the salary would be much higher, but which was only eligible for a bachelor—he did not even come to bid us good-bye, but sent his sister Fanny to do so, and to tell us all about it. I was very sorry at the time: not at his good fortune—I am sure you will understand that—but because, when one has very few friends, to lose one of them always seems hard; and this one I had liked especially. Fanny seemed sorry, too, though she talked a great deal about his being able to save money now, and perhaps to get something even better soon; but after awhile she came to see us much less often, and it was only by a letter from her that I heard of his marriage to a young widow with a good income of her own; the sister of his head master, I believe she was. I don't know why I have mentioned all this here. It really has nothing to do with my story.

It was shortly after this event, however, that the great event happened which altered all the tenor of our lives. I mean the death of my godfather, and his leaving his whole property between me and a nephew of his; and to my dying day I shall never forget the commotion in our quiet house when the tidings arrived. I have not mentioned this godfather of mine before, and with good reason, for he was the most unamiable and disagreeable man I ever knew in my life. At one time, some eight years before, when I was just twenty, I had gone to live with him as reader and amanuensis; and the two years I spent in that beautiful manor house of his, driving in his smoothly-rolling carriage, and eating at his luxurious table, were to me the most miserable I had ever spent in my life. To every one else the wonder seemed to be that they had endured so long. He had quarrelled with all his near relations and with all his neighbours, so that not a person ever came to the house, even for a friendly call; and, except to his lawyer's, he never went anywhere. He was seventy-five, and there was not a creature in the world who liked or respected him, or whom he liked or trusted. Even his servants he was perpetually accusing of robbing him, and changing. It was a wonder that any girl, coming from a happy home, could endure being bound down to such companionship; but I was strong and healthy, with a naturally placid mind and a temper not easily ruffled; and besides, I could not help feeling a kind of pity for the miserable old man, whose evil humours and tyrannical nature had left him so utterly alone and friendless in his last days. Besides, he paid me a salary, and I had the pleasure of sending the greater part of it home to the dear ones there, and of thinking of the comforts it would get for them. I would have gone through much worse things for that.

It came to an end abruptly. Mr. Moffat, my godfather, finding that neither bullying nor suspicious had any effect on me, had grown much kinder to me; and one day he called me into his study, and, after a lengthened dissertation on the deceits and depravity of my sex in general, astounded me by a sudden offer to adopt me from that day forward, make me the mistress of Chesil-

ton Manor in his lifetime, and its owner and the heiress to all his wealth at his death, on condition that I gave up my mother and sister, and any other relations I might have, never wrote to or visited them, but took his name and agreed to belong to him only, and him wholly, as though I were his own child, in the future. He would have no sharers in his favours, he said angrily; no greedy interlopers coming between him and the person he chose to benefit.

Of course I declined. If, after my disclaimer at the beginning of this story, you call that romantic, you must; but I disagree with you all the same. Had I accepted, the result would in all probability have been the same. I should have given Mr. Moffat the right to accuse me of preferring riches and luxury to all the ties which duty and affection ought to have made sacred to a woman; and he would have used it to make me feel, by daily insults and suspicions, how low I had fallen in his opinion; after which, he would most likely have seized on the first pretext to pick a quarrel with me and turn me out of the house.

As it was, I thanked the old man very cordially, and told him I was perfectly willing to stay there as his secretary, and serve him faithfully and actively as long as he pleased; but that to be his daughter was out of the question, seeing that I wouldn't give up one kiss of my own precious mother, or one curl from Lucy's golden head for all the lands and money with which he could endow me.

In return, he flew into a furious passion; stormed, cursed, abused me, ordered me out of the house at an hour's notice, and went on more and more violently, till at last he fell down in a fit, and had to be lifted up and carried to bed.

Of course, under such circumstances, it was impossible for me to leave him. Instead, I had to send for the doctor; and for the next few weeks, during which he continued very ill, I hardly slept or changed my clothes, but nursed him night and day, regardless of all the ill words he lavished on me; and at last, by the doctor's help, succeeded in bringing him through and into a fair way of recovery. After that he mended quickly; and one day told me that he saw I was bitterly repenting of my foolish ingratitude and insolence; and therefore, if I liked to go on my knees and ask his pardon for them, he had determined to forgive me and renew his late offer—on the same conditions!

What I said doesn't matter. I suppose I managed better, for he didn't have a fit that time; and the same night I was back in London and hugging Lucy till she screamed.

And now he was dead, and this was his will!

His last words to me had been taunts and insults. I had never had word or line from him since, and should not have been surprised to hear that he had forbidden my name to be mentioned, and ordered every trifle or scrap of paper left behind by me to be burnt, as I had heard of his doing in the case of a former favourite, his own nephew and namesake. Yet in this, his last will and testament, he left everything he possessed between me and this very nephew, because, as he stated, I was the only girl he had ever met who cared for something else in the world more than money and fineries; and because, thinking in calmer mood

over their past relations to each other, he had decided that his nephew's disobedience and revolt might in part have been owing to undue harshness on his own side. The lad had good in him—he always knew that—but he wanted strength of mind and ballast. Now Mary Luscombe had enough of both these to float a line-of-battle ship; and therefore he desired to benefit the two young people, and atone for any prior shortcomings of his own towards them, by leaving his whole property to be divided between them on one condition—that they married one another.

So *that* was the condition! We might have known that there would be one; and, indeed, as the lawyer said, we had cause to be grateful that it was of so commonplace and ordinary a character. Nay, my godfather must have improved very much before his death; for his will even contained a loophole of indulgence for the person (unless wholly wilful and contumacious) who might be disposed to rebel against it.

Lewis Moffat and I were to marry and share the property equally, *in case* neither of us was already married at the time of the testator's demise; otherwise the married party was to get one-third only, and the single one two-thirds, to include the house; while, in the event of either refusing to marry the other, on the ground of ill-health, morality, or a previous engagement (they being both single), the person so dissenting was to receive £500 a year only, the whole of the rest of the property to go to the other one. All lesser reasons for refusal than those given to be regarded as worthless, and as excluding the utterer from any share whatsoever in the inheritance, which, in the event of both declining the proposed match, was to be invested for the maintenance of a home for indigent bachelors over sixty years of age, and with no female belongings.

"He must certainly have been mad," said mother, when she had read the whole of this wonderful production; then, turning to Mr. James, the lawyer, who had come up to London to see us, "but what about the other heir, the young man? Where is he?"

The old gentleman smiled.

"That is just the question I was expecting you to ask, and I am unable to answer it at the present moment, as no one at Chesilton seems to have had any news of the young man for some time back. I never met him myself, Mr. Moffat senior having changed his legal adviser more than once since the quarrel with his nephew; but from what I gathered he must have sunk into extreme poverty very shortly after that event; and I have even found letters of his appealing for help to his uncle and endorsed by the latter with '*Not to be answered*' in red ink. For anything we know, as yet, he may be dead or gone abroad, or, on the other side (which is equally probable), may have mended his fortunes, married and settled down almost under our hand. We shall advertise for him of course, in all the principal home and colonial papers, and take every other likely means of finding out his whereabouts; and in the meantime, Miss Luscombe, if you feel disposed to take up your residence at the Manor, I see no reason why you should not do so, seeing that you at any rate are on the spot, unmarried; and we may hope," he bowed and laughed a little, "not contumaciously determined to resist your godfather's will without

knowing anything worse of your co-legates than those youthful foibles for which his uncle himself owns he has already been punished too harshly."

"I have no doubt of that," I said with an involuntary shiver at the idea of what any man of the slightest spirit must have endured under my godfather's tyranny; "and, Mr. James, I am not contumaciously determined on anything, except this, of letting the whole question of marriage remain undiscussed till Mr. Moffat's nephew is found, and we all know something more of him than we do now." On which Mr. James shook hands with me, said I was a delightfully sensible young woman, and left us to set on foot the inquiries he had indicated.

(To be concluded next number.)

TO MY LOVE IN HEAVEN.

IF you could come, who went so far away,
In that one moment when your last long
breath

Fluttered into the hands of dreadful Death,
Whose presence waited by you on that day,
When none could bid your lovely spirit stay,
I would not call you to my fireside,
For there, between us twain, would stand alway
This weary truth—I live, and you have died.

I could not bear your soul to take its stand
Beside my soul, still 'prisoned in this life;
Marred by the strains of many a dismal strife,
I do not wish to touch your spirit hand;
Nor note the difference that the shadowland
Has made in those sweet eyes I so adored.

I could not know you—one of that vast band
Whose lives from ours have in some dread way
soared.

I feel you know this, and so come no more
To sit beside me when the day grows late;
Still, your calm eyes, my eyes can e'er create,
Gaze into mine from Memory's misty shore.
And when my heart cries out, in anguish sore,
I feel a spirit glide into my room,
And quiet peace upon me seems to pour
Sweet love I deemed I buried in your tomb.

J. E. PANTON.

THE WIDOW WITHOUT A RING.

BY PAUL BENISON.

ON a lovely spring morning five years ago, some little amusement was created in one of the thoroughfares of Knightsbridge by the appearance, at a much frequented crossing, of a young man, fashionably dressed, with a broom in his hand. He had a clear complexion and bright eyes with long lashes; his features, too, were regular, but the colour in his cheeks was scarcely healthy, and generally about the face there was a worn and faded look. The broom just mentioned had been obtained from a ragged urchin, who, having received a present for lending it, sat on a door-step at a little distance, grinning away, and eating bread and bacon, quite agreeable that the world should wag as it pleased, so long as his personal commissariat was attended to.

No crowd collected, because, for one thing, the spectacle had been going on for a day or two, and then it was thought that probably a bet was at the bottom of the affair, and there was, after all, really nothing to see. But, as we have said, amusement was felt. The young man brushed away, touched his hat, and took his coppers, with a polite bow, indeed, but a perfectly stolid countenance; and so people smiled and looked back, and smiled again, and spoke to each other, and passed on, and were lost in the eternal stream.

Nearly opposite the crossing thus temporarily served rose a large and fashionable mansion; and shortly after twelve o'clock an old man, well dressed, with a military aspect and an upright bearing, though somewhat infirm from advanced years, a tightly-folded umbrella in his hand, issued out of the principal entrance, and was proceeding leisurely towards Piccadilly. His destination would have required him to have used the crossing over which the amateur presided, but an event occurred which prevented his completing the transit.

Advancing up a street leading direct to a gate of the Park, and crossing the large thoroughfare mentioned at first, was seen a T-cart four-wheeled gig. It was drawn by a spirited blood-chestnut, who, irritated perhaps by enforced stoppages, and feeling the weather in his fine skin, had just got out of hand with the young lady, in a riding-habit, who was driving him. The chestnut had drawn his head up, and was coming in bounds along, bearing straight down on the old military gentleman. A liveried groom in the back seat stood up anxiously, with a view to assisting, but the moment was perilous. The crossing-sweeper was, however, quite equal to the emergency. He threw down his broom, and, rushing with great activity into the roadway, and towards the coming gig, sprang at the rein of the horse, and, after being dragged a little way, succeeded in pulling the animal round. In doing this, he was himself thrown before a carriage, whose horses could not be stopped till they had knocked him down with considerable violence. The young lady's groom was at the chestnut's head in a moment; the old officer came forward—he was entirely unhurt, but deeply moved by the occurrence—and forthwith superintended the removal of the sweeper, who was shaken and bruised, but not seriously injured, to the mansion at the corner. The incident then closed, as they say in the reports of the French debates.

But the evening of the same day, about sunset, a girl plainly dressed, but of a sweet and loveable face, might have been seen hanging about the spot. She had black hair, just tinged here and there with a tawny shade, but blue eyes, and a small, yet full-lipped mouth, enclosing exquisite teeth; her form slight and supple, but rounded in its outlines. The boy who was the actual sweeper had been away, spending part of his present, but returned for a chance collection of halfpence, and on coming back was interviewed by the young woman. After this conversation, the girl went across to the large mansion, and rang the bell at the servants' entrance very gently. She was relieved when the door was opened by an old man—for the youthful John Thomas is apt to be a little forward in the company of an unprotected female

of good looks, but not apparently exalted station. She said very simply that she had heard that Captain Nigel Travers had had an accident, and that she was anxious to know how he was going on.

The old footman, who had daughters of his own, replied very civilly that the captain was shaken, but not much hurt; and after some further talk, he even consented to give the invalid privately a scrap of paper, on which was written—"MARY MOORE," and promised to say that she had called.

This accident to the captain was the cause of a reconciliation between him and his father. He was a second son, and had been put into a cavalry regiment, and, though very fortunate in promotion, had been such a spendthrift and *roué*, that his debts had run to an amount his father refused to pay; and just on obtaining his captaincy in an unusually short time, he was obliged to leave the army, and compound with his creditors. After this, pushed from pillar to post, and in the direst straits, he had sought to shame his father—no longer on speaking terms—into compassion by sweeping a crossing opposite his door. But what, perhaps, would never have been gained by insult was willingly conceded in gratitude for the sudden filial impulse commanding Nigel Travers to risk his own safety sooner than the old man should sustain hurt.

His father's plan for Nigel's reformation turned, of course, on marriage—that all-sufficing Holloway's pill for a wasted youth and professional failure. He was to make up to the only daughter of Dr. Wilson, the rector of their village in Yorkshire. She had a pleasant, intelligent face, but was quite thirty, and decidedly lame, endowed, however, it was understood, with a small private fortune, which had come to her from her deceased mother, Lady Angela Wilson. If this arrangement were carried out, the old General, Lord Travers, would set up Nigel in a subordinate house belonging to the estates, and would give him an allowance. Archibald, the elder brother, was agreeable to the plan, and acquiesced in the alienation of the Grange in favour of the cadet. Of course the idea was still merely in embryo when Nigel was getting over his shake, and was received by him in sorrowful silence.

The first place the captain went to when he was able to leave his father's house was an old world locality near the river, called Walcheren Square. Three sides of this were occupied by gloomy houses of moderate size, but the fourth was made up of little cottage residences. These had two entrances—one into the square, and one at the back into a small street.

To the cottage called the "Syringas," surrounded by its tiny garden full of flowers, Nigel penetrated by the door in Scheldt Street. On the steps he was met by the dark, handsome girl with blue eyes, who had called herself Mary Moore. She was his wife. He had fallen in with her and her mother at the seaside, had followed up the acquaintance, and with whatever object the adventure had been commenced, it ended in an access of real affection; and he had gone to church with her. Her mother was the widow of an Irishman, a clerk in a mercantile house, who, on his death, left her little but the pretty home

he had purchased. Both mother and daughter worked embroidery with great skill, and by this they lived. The mother was now dead, and in Nigel's distress he had fallen back on the cottage, where Mary with her needle eked out the scanty income from billiards and cards, which was all the captain had to depend upon. He had clothes left, but really when he took his broom in his hand he was by no means assured of the daily meals.

There was a scrap of a servant whose wages were broken meat and a periodical shilling, and as soon as Nigel arrived she was sent out for food and wine from a restaurant. It was mid-afternoon, and Mary and her husband dined together, and then sat talking, talking through the long May evening. He, of course, dwelling, as well he might, with infinite iteration on the salvation which seemed in sight and yet could never be realized. To do him justice, he was tender and kind, and spoke of his marriage with Mary as a circumstance which when disclosed would wreck the reconciliation with his father—but one, nevertheless, which had been the source of great happiness to him, and in defence of which he would bravely battle. There was something rather appalling in the girl's calmness; it seemed unreal and strange—that when matters were being discussed which so intimately affected their future, she should appear self-possessed, unembarrassed—nay, in a certain measure, indifferent. Those hours, lived for ever in Mary's memory, with all their details: the scent of the flowers, the voice of the man she loved, the cries of children in the street, the waltz tune—half exhilarating, half melancholy—on the pianette without, the tender light dying away so gradually into the falling gloom—aye! the falling gloom! Nigel had to return to Knightsbridge, and at the gate, when Mary clasped him round the neck, looked in his face and pressed a long, long kiss on his lips, there was a strange gleam in her expression which was scarcely that of hope.

When her husband had departed, Mary came back into the room where they had sat together, and occupied the seat she had occupied before. There was a window on the Square side, and another looking into Scheldt Street. The one towards the street was open. The faint sheen of a four days' old moon succeeded to the twilight, and the slow tramp of couples walking in the enticing night was heard, and ever and again a few sentences of their speech, as they came exactly opposite. Presently, the Scrap came with a light, but it was refused and its bearer bidden to go to bed. And the current of Mary's thoughts flowed entirely in one direction. What was love worth that could not make a great sacrifice? Irish love, too, so deep, so trusting! Why should love hesitate to undergo absence and concealment, when love could face death and had often so faced it? Why it was a common newspaper story; some poor servant girl crossed in love, creeping unseen by night, to the willow-watched bank, and slipping without a cry into the stifling water. Surely it was a case of being crossed in love, when your love was destruction to the loved one! But it was nothing more. To sell the cottage, to change a home, to change a name, to be lost in London—no difficult task when nobody wants to find you—all these things were less than death,

and yet death had been cheerfully sought by a crossed love!

But would Nigel understand and accept the sacrifice? He certainly would. Strange that it should be so, but repeated instances cannot permit the doubt, that a woman will calculate on the weakness and worthlessness of her lover without much pain, if she be assured that the baseness will not transfer the love that was her's to another. He might marry the lame, elderly virgin (Nigel had given particulars); but he would never love her; laugh! how could he? Nigel had always been ashamed of his marriage with her—Mary—but it had not altered his affections. Let him marry—she could bear it; she could hide; she could obliterate herself—he would be saved socially, and he would love her still and long for her society. These thoughts had so completely filled the girl's mind, that she had scarcely noticed that the brief moonlight had faded and the windows were darkened. But now a strange penetrating glare played on the wall, played on the table, and at last dazzled her eyes—and soon after there was a loud ring at the bell. She went to the door and found a policeman.

"Your window is open," he said.

"I know it, thank you. I was sitting up."

"O, that's it, is it? there was no light so I rang. Good-night."

"Good-night."

But that searching luminous eye suggested another line of thought. In some sort of way, Mary associated it with conscience. And conscience claimed to be heard for a moment. And conscience said, "You are grossly wronging the lame lady." And it required the rest of the night for love's sophistry to establish that if the lady never knew the truth, she would suffer no harm. And it should be Mary's care, that she never did know. And when these long struggles were decided in favour of the wrong action, then the strange solitary morning broke, and the girl looked out, with a feeling of awe, on the silent, untenanted scene. But her mind was made up.

Nigel visited Scheldt Street again, in a day or two, but the cottage was entirely closed, and *To be Sold* marked on a board, with reference to be made to a local agent.

In the spring of 1881, the marriage of Captain Travers with Miss Ilma Wilson, was jocosely called a safety match, and was attributed to Lady Di Palfreyman, who was congratulated on her success in matrimonial combinations. For it was argued—if Lady Di had not tried to run over Lord Travers, the sweeper would never have caught at her horse—would never have been knocked down, and consequently never forgiven. Then, unforgiven, he could not have married; but now all was serene, the prodigal had returned and was happily and securely settled. As the amiable Ilma limped up the church, a dowager who was fond of young men, whispered to one of them—that she hoped Nigel was not in a worse hobble than before; and afterwards getting the ears of a small circle of the *jeunesse dorée*, she remarked that at any rate Mrs. Travers would never run away from her husband.

She was right, Miss Wilson was not likely to fly from Nigel—but how about retaining Nigel?

We all hold our lease of this earthly tenement from that grim landlord, who will turn us out at last into the pitiless night. A reform in habits sometimes comes too late—nay, the very reform itself seems to hasten the consummation. We say *seems*, because it may be only *after* reform, and not *on account of* reform that the breakdown comes. But the man about town turned justice of the peace is occasionally a transformation scene very slightly preceding the fall of the curtain.

View the sprightly Nigel, therefore, in his pretty country seat, first down on the sofa or only able to drive in a pony chaise about the grounds. And then—after a few short weeks—no longer in the garden or on the sofa, but in his bedroom, and requiring tender care; which Ilma was willing enough to bestow, but wisely held would be best secured by professional aid.

And further—view the hospital nurse from London, with the dark hair and the blue eyes, who got the engagement. We know her, Nigel knew her, but poor Ilma did not know her. Who could grudge Mary, in a life destined to be desolate, that one sweet and consoling recollection that her husband had died in her arms.

We read in classic story of Sappho and others, who from sheer heart-ache leaped from Leucas promontory into the sea, and the commentators simper of the fierce antique passions, and we wonder that emotion could be so overmastering and so reckless.

But here is a deed which no reasonable man, who studies his journals, can doubt has been done in these very present times of ours—a wrongful deed done, after heroic fashion, by a woman, and acquiesced in, after poltroon fashion, by her husband.

Nor is there any strain on the credulity in picturing an honourable Mrs. Nigel Travers, who is good to the poor and sends flowers for the altar, and seems all that position and deportment can require, and whose comings and goings are recorded in paragraphs, and yet who is, in sober reality, the very creature she would most loathe and spurn—the widow in all but the marriage ring. The marriage no marriage at all, and the golden hoop on her finger only an ornament, and in no way a symbol.

But had Mary peace?

The flurried waves, edged with rainbow hues, and shot with sunset light from the westering orb above the groves, break in foam and thunder on the Coromandel coast. The cashew trees descend almost to the salt brink, whilst palms and plantains and bamboos form an enceinte. The long white building with its green venetians rises above the garden wall. Other exercise for the ladies of the convent is neither desired nor provided than walking on the flat Oriental roof. A veil that is thrown open towards the sea-breeze, discloses the features of Mary Moore, in religion Sister Fidelis. The bell begins to ring, and the lighted chapel notes the hour of vespers.

"Is exile reparation?" she murmurs, "it is all I have to offer."

Perhaps prayer may assuage the painful thought.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

ON "FURNISHED APARTMENTS."

"OH, you have some rooms to let?"
"Mother!"

"Well, what is it?"

"'Ere's a gentleman about the rooms."

"Ask 'im in. I'll be up in a minute."

"Will yer step inside, sir? Mother'll be up in a minute."

So you step inside, and, after a minute, "mother" comes slowly up the kitchen stairs, unttying her apron as she comes, and calling down instructions to some one below about the potatoes.

"Good morning, sir," says "mother," with a washed-out smile; "will you step this way, please?"

"Oh, it's hardly worth while coming up," you say; "what sort of rooms are they, and how much?"

"Well," says the landlady, "if you'll step upstairs, I'll show them to you."

So, with a protesting murmur, meant to imply that any waste of time complained of hereafter must not be laid to your charge, you follow "mother" upstairs.

At the first landing, you run up against a pail and a broom, whereupon "mother" expatiates upon the unreliability of servant girls, and bawls over the balusters for Sarah to come and take them away at once. When you get outside the rooms, she pauses, with her hand upon the door, to explain to you that they are rather untidy just at present, as the last lodger left only yesterday; and she also adds that this is their cleaning day—it always is. With this understanding, you enter, and both stand solemnly feasting your eyes upon the scene before you. The rooms cannot be said to appear inviting. Even "mother's" face betrays no admiration. Untenanted "furnished apartments," viewed in the morning sunlight, do not inspire cheery sensations. There is a lifeless air about them. It is a very different thing when you have settled down and are living in them. With your old familiar household gods to greet your gaze whenever you glance up, and all your little nick-nacks spread around you—with the photos of all the girls that you have loved and lost ranged upon the mantel-piece, and half-a-dozen disreputable-looking pipes scattered about in painfully prominent positions—with one carpet slipper peeping from beneath the coal-box, and the other perched on the top of the piano—with the well-known pictures to hide the dingy walls, and those dear old friends, your books, higgledy-piggledy all over the place—with the bits of old blue china that your mother prized, and the screen she worked in those far bygone days, when the sweet old face was laughing and young, and the white soft hair tumbled in gold-brown curls from under the coal-scuttle bonnet—

Ah, old screen, what a gorgeous personage you must have been in your young days, when the tulips and roses and lilies (all growing from one

stem) were fresh in their glistening sheen! Many a summer and winter have come and gone since then, my friend, and you have played with the dancing firelight until you have grown sad and grey. Your brilliant colours are fast fading now, and the envious moths have gnawed your silken threads. You are withering away like the dead hands that wove you. Do you ever think of those dead hands? You seem so grave and thoughtful sometimes, that I almost think you do. Come, you and I and the deep-glowing embers, let us talk together. Tell me, in your silent language, what you remember of those young days, when you lay on my little mother's lap, and her girlish fingers played with your rainbow tresses. Was there never a lad near, sometimes—never a lad who would seize one of those little hands to smother it with kisses, and who would persist in holding it, thereby sadly interfering with the progress of your making? Was not your frail existence often put in jeopardy by this same clumsy, headstrong lad, who would toss you disrespectfully aside that he—not satisfied with one—might hold both hands and gaze up into the loved eyes? I can see that lad now through the haze of the flickering twilight. He is an eager, bright-eyed boy, with pinching, dandy shoes and tight-fitting smalls, snowy shirt frill and stock, and—oh! such curly hair. A wild, light-hearted boy! Can he be the great, grave gentleman upon whose stick I used to ride cross-legged, the care-worn man into whose thoughtful face I used to gaze with childish reverence, and whom I used to call father? You say "yes," old screen; but are you quite sure? It is a serious charge you are bringing; can it be possible? Did he have to kneel down in those wonderful smalls and pick you up, and rearrange you, before he was forgiven, and his curly head smoothed by my mother's little hand? Ah! old screen, and did the lads and the lassies go making love fifty years ago just as they do now? Are men and women so unchanged? Did little maidens' hearts beat the same under pearl embroidered bodices as they do under Mother Hubbard cloaks? Have steel casques and chimney-pot hats made no difference to the brains that work beneath them? Oh, Time! great Chronos! and is this your power? Have you dried up seas and levelled mountains, and left the tiny human heart strings to defy you? Ah, yes! they were spun by a Mightier than thou, and they stretch beyond your narrow ken, for their ends are made fast in eternity. Ay, you may mow down the leaves and the blossoms, but the roots of life lie too deep for your sickle to sever. You refashion Nature's garments, but you cannot vary by a jot the throbbings of her pulse. The world rolls round obedient to your laws, but the heart of man is not of your kingdom, for in its birthplace "a thousand years are but as yesterday."

I am getting away, though, I fear, from my "furnished apartments," and I hardly know how to get back. But I have some excuse for my meanderings this time. It is a piece of old furniture that has led me astray, and fancies gather, somehow, round old furniture, like moss around old stones. One's chairs and tables get to be almost part of one's life, and to seem like quiet friends. What strange tales the wooden-headed old fellows could tell did they but choose to speak! At what unsuspected comedies and

tragedies have they not assisted. What bitter tears have been sobbed into that old sofa cushion! What passionate whisperings the settees must have overheard.

New furniture has no charms for me, compared with old. It is the old things that we love—the old faces, the old books, the old jokes. New furniture can make a palace, or a show-room at a Health Exhibition (which is much the same thing) but it takes *old* furniture to make a home. Not merely old in itself, lodging-house furniture generally is that, but it must be old to us, old in associations and recollections. The furniture of furnished apartments, however ancient it may be in reality, is new to our eyes, and we feel as though we could never get on with it. As, too, in the case of all fresh acquaintances, whether wooden or human (and there is very little difference between the two species, sometimes) everything impresses you with its worst aspect. The knobby woodwork and shiny horse-hair covering of the easy-chair suggest anything but ease. The mirror is smoky. The curtains want washing. The carpet is frayed. The table looks as if it would go over the instant anything was rested on it. The grate is cheerless, the wall-paper hideous. The ceiling appears to have had coffee spilt all over it, and the ornaments—well, they are worse than the wall-paper.

There must surely be some special and secret manufactory for the production of lodging-house ornaments. Precisely the same articles are to be found at every lodging-house all over the kingdom, and *they are never seen anywhere else*. There are the two—what do you call them? they stand one at each end of the mantelpiece, where they are never safe; and they are hung round with long triangular slips of glass that clank against one another and make you nervous. In the commoner class of rooms, these works of art are supplemented by a couple of pieces of china which might each be meant to represent a cow sitting upon its hind legs, or a model of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, or a dog, or anything else you like to fancy. Somewhere about the room you come across a bilious looking object, which, at first, you take to be a lump of dough left about by one of the children, but which, on scrutiny, seems to resemble an underdone Cupid. This thing the landlady calls a statue. Then there is a "sampler" worked by some idiot related to the family, a picture of the "Huguenots," two or three Scripture texts, and a highly framed and glazed certificate to the effect that the father has been vaccinated, or is an Odd Fellow, or something of that sort.

You examine these various attractions, and then dismally ask what the rent is.

"That's rather a good deal," you say, on hearing the figure.

"Well, to tell you the truth," answers the landlady with a sudden burst of candour; "I've always had"—(mentioning a sum a good deal in excess of the first-named amount), "and before that I used to have"—(a still higher figure.)

What the rent of apartments must have been twenty years ago makes one shudder to think of. Every landlady makes you feel thoroughly ashamed of yourself by informing you, whenever the subject crops up, that she used to get twice as much for her rooms as you are paying. Young men lodgers of the last generation must have been

of a wealthier class than they are now, or they must have ruined themselves. I should have had to live in an attic.

Curious, that in lodgings the rule of life is reversed. The higher you get up in the world, the lower you come down in your lodgings. On the lodging-house ladder, the poor man is at the top, the rich man underneath. You start in the attic, and work your way down to the first-floor.

A good many great men have lived in attics, and some have died there. Attics, says the dictionary, are "places where lumber is stored," and the world has used them to store a good deal of its lumber in at one time or another. Its preachers and painters and poets, its deep-browed men who will find out things, its fire-eyed men who will tell truths that no one wants to hear—these are the lumber that the world hides away in its attics. Haydn grew up in an attic, and Chatterton starved in one. Addison and Goldsmith wrote in garrets. Faraday and De Quincey knew them well. Dr. Johnson camped cheerfully in them, sleeping soundly—too soundly sometimes—upon their truckle beds, like the sturdy old soldier of fortune that he was, inured to hardship, and all careless of himself. Dickens spent his youth among them, Morland his old age—alas! a drunken, premature old age. Hans Andersen, the fairy king, dreamt his sweet fancies beneath their sloping roofs. Poor, wayward-hearted Collins leant his head upon their crazy tables; priggish Benjamin Franklin; Savage, the wrong-headed, much troubled, when he could afford any softer bed than a doorstep; young Bloomfield, "Bobby" Burns, Hogarth, Watts the engineer—the roll is endless. Ever since the habitations of men were reared two storeys high has the garret been the nursery of genius.

No one who honours the aristocracy of mind can feel ashamed of acquaintanceship with them. Their damp-stained walls are sacred to the memory of noble names. If all the wisdom of the world and all its art—all the spoils that it has won from Nature, all the fire that it has snatched from Heaven—were gathered together and divided into heaps, and we could point and say, for instance. These mighty truths were flashed forth in the brilliant salon, amidst the ripple of light laughter and the sparkle of bright eyes; and This deep knowledge was dug up in the quiet study where the bust of Pallas looks serenely down on leather-scented shelves; and This heap belongs to the crowded street; and That to the daisied field, the heap that would tower up high above the rest, as a mountain above hills, would be the one at which we should look up and say: this noblest pile of all—these glorious paintings and this wondrous music, these trumpet words, these solemn thoughts, these daring deeds, they were forged and fashioned amidst misery and pain in the sordid squalor of the city garret. There, from their eyries, while the world heaved and throbbed below, the kings of men sent forth their eagle thoughts to wing their flight through the ages. There, where the sunlight streaming through the broken panes, fell on rotting boards and crumbling walls; there, from their lofty thrones, those rag-clothed Joves have hurled their thunderbolts and shaken before now the earth to its foundations.

Huddle them up in your lumber-rooms, oh,

world Shut them fast in and turn the key of poverty upon them. Weld close the bars and let them fret their hero lives away within the narrow cage. Leave them there to starve, and rot, and die. Laugh at the frenzied beatings of their hands against the door. Roll onward in your dust and noise and pass them by forgotten.

But take care, lest they turn and sting you. All do not, like the fabled Phoenix, warble sweet melodies in their agony; sometimes they spit venom—venom you must breathe whether you will or no, for you cannot seal their mouths though you may fetter their limbs. You can lock the door upon them, but they burst open their shaky lattices, and call out over the house-tops so that men cannot but hear. You hounded wild Rousseau into the meanest garret of the Rue St. Jacques, and jeered at his angry shrieks. But the thin, piping tones swelled, a hundred years later, into the sullen roar of the French Revolution, and civilization to this day is quivering to the reverberations of his voice.

As for myself, however, I like an attic. Not to live in. As residences they are inconvenient. There is too much getting up and down stairs connected with them to please me. It puts one unpleasantly in mind of the tread-mill. The form of the ceiling offers too many facilities for bumping your head, and too few for shaving. And the note of the tom cat, as he sings to his love in the still night, outside on the tiles, become positively distasteful when heard so near.

No, for living in, give me a suite of rooms on the first floor of a Piccadilly mansion (I wish somebody would); but, for thinking in, let me have an attic up ten flights of stairs in the densest quarter of the city. I have all Herr Teufelsdröckh's affection for attics. There is a sublimity about their loftiness. I love to "sit at ease and look down upon the wasps' nest beneath;" to listen to the dull murmur of the human tide ebbing and flowing ceaselessly through the narrow streets and lanes below. How small men seem, how like a swarm of ants sweltering in endless confusion on their tiny hill. How petty seems the work on which they are hurrying and skurrying. How childishly they jostle against one another, and turn to snarl and scratch. They jabber and screech and curse, but their puny voices do not reach up here. They fret, and fume, and rage, and pant, and die; "but I, mein Werther, sit above it all; I am alone with the stars."

The most extraordinary attic I ever came across was one a friend and I once shared, many years ago. Of all eccentrically planned things, from Bradshaw to the maze at Hampton Court, that room was the eccentricalist. The architect who designed it must have been a genius, though I cannot help thinking that his talents would have been better employed in contriving puzzles than in shaping human habitations. No figure in Euclid could give any idea of that apartment. It contained seven corners, two of the walls sloped to a point, and the window was just over the fireplace. The only possible position for the bedstead was between the door and the cupboard. To get anything out of the cupboard we had to scramble over the bed, and a large percentage of the various commodities thus obtained were absorbed by the bedclothes. Indeed, so many things were spilled, and dropped upon the bed that, towards night

time, it became a sort of small co-operative stores. Coal was what it always had most in stock. We used to keep our coal in the bottom part of the cupboard, and, when any was wanted, we had to climb over the bed, fill a shovelful, and then crawl back. It was an exciting moment when we reached the middle of the bed. We would hold our breath, fix our eyes upon the shovel, and poise ourselves for the last move. The next instant, we, and the coals, and the shovel, and the bed would be all mixed up together.

I've heard of people going into raptures over beds of coal. We slept in one every night, and were not in the least stuck up about it.

But our attic, unique though it was, had by no means exhausted the architect's sense of humour. The arrangement of the whole house was a marvel of originality. All the doors opened outwards, so that if any one wanted to leave a room at the same moment that you were coming downstairs it was unpleasant for you. There was no ground-floor, its ground-floor belonged to a house in the next court, and the front door opened direct upon a flight of stairs leading down to the cellar. Visitors, on entering the house, would suddenly shoot past the person who had answered the door to them, and disappear down these stairs. Those of a nervous temperament used to imagine that it was a trap laid for them, and would shout murder, as they lay on their backs at the bottom, till somebody came and picked them up.

It is a long time ago, now, that I last saw the inside of an attic. I have tried various floors since, but I have not found that they have made much difference to me. Life tastes much the same whether we quaff it from a golden goblet or drink it out of a stone mug. The hours come laden with the same mixture of joy and sorrow, no matter where we wait for them. A waistcoat of broadcloth or of fustian is alike to a aching heart, and we laugh no merrier on velvet cushions than we can on wooden chairs. Often have I sighed in those low-ceiling'd rooms, yet disappointments have come neither less nor lighter since I quitted them. Life works upon a compensating balance, and the happiness we gain in one direction we lose in another. As our means increase, so do our desires; and we ever stand midway between the two. When we reside in an attic, we enjoy a supper of fried fish and stout. When we occupy the first floor, it takes an elaborate dinner at the "Continental" to give us the same amount of satisfaction.

JEROME K. JEROME.

MEETING.

I.

I DREAMED not, that day, ere I saw her face,
How God was just leading me gently forth
To light unawares on some living grace
Mid the wind-swept wolds of the bitter North;
And never a sunrise of joy and shame
Flashed out on my cheeks, though I heard her
name.

II.

I dreamed not how life's supremest goal
Was almost gained, through long yearning
thence;

How this dull, dead half of our mutual soul
 Would cleave to its fellow a minute hence;
 And never a pulse of me throbb'd—"Rejoice!
 The dead shall awake!"—though I heard her
 voice.

III.

As meteors that furrow the breathless night,
 So, kindled (life seeming but now begun)
 In the sudden rush of a new delight,
 Our half-souls blended, and burned as one;
 And roses were rife in that barren place
 (Whence this forehead was crowned) when I
 saw her face!

VERNON ISMAY.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT.

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

CHAPTER III.

NOT A FIRST-CLASS PASSENGER.

AGNES was melancholy for a day and a half after leaving England; then her regrets began to yield to the cheerful interest of her surroundings, and she was able to perceive the sense of her sister's reasoning.

"It's so absurd of you, Agnes, to look miserable because you can't have everything at once. Nobody can. It isn't in the nature of things. If you go on at this rate you'll become more unhappy the more enjoyments you know of. I do think you're a very lucky girl. You know you never would have made up your mind to get married and go away yourself; but I have taken all the trouble off your hands, married Jack, and brought you."

"I know it's very good of you," said Agnes with becoming meekness, "and of Jack too."

"Good of Jack!" interrupted Kate, opening her eyes widely; "good of Jack to marry me! Good gracious, Agnes, if you think such a fearful thing, don't give utterance to it, at least in the presence of Jack himself. The nature of man is so full of conceit, that he'll perhaps come to believe it if you tell him it is so."

Jack laughed, and Agnes hastened to explain, "I don't mean that. I mean good to take me with you."

"What nonsense! Jack's very glad that I have a sister who'll come. Perhaps I never would have come away without. You're very glad, aren't you, Jack?"

"Awfully glad," said Jack, with every appearance of sincerity.

On the whole Agnes found that it was easier, as well as pleasanter, to be cheerful than to be melancholy. The weather was beautiful, and no one was ill. There were passengers on board whom Kate pronounced to be "nice people," and Kate herself became a little queen in the small society thus thrown together at hazard. Her style was perhaps more suitable to the young married woman than to the girl at home. Certainly she obtained more general admiration now than she had done in Elmdale. There, Agnes, in spite of her timidity and shyness, had received

the larger share of popular, and especially of masculine, applause. Kate Langford's piquant ways, and audacious occasional impertinences, achieved, however, a success which had not been granted to Kate Leake. It is natural for a very young girl just married to imagine that, because she has charmed her husband, she is charming to everyone else; and society is ready to judge her leniently on the occasion, and even, for a time at least, to take her on her own valuation. Kate's vivacity undoubtedly eclipsed her sister's sweetness in those pleasant first weeks of the voyage; and there were no disagreeable results, because Agnes was incapable of jealousy. Admiration was only valuable to her when it bore fruit in affectionate care and thoughtful kindness; therefore she was glad when her sister received those superfluous marks of it which only embarrassed herself. Flattery was perplexing, and purely complimentary attentions were troublesome to her. The position of second to an interesting part suited her well; she liked to watch, with bright-eyed wonder, the saucy airs of her sister, and to listen to her audacious chatter. In return Kate caressed and teased her in a pleasantly patronizing manner, standing between her and the rest of the world, so that she received that tempered sunshine of society and gaiety which she most enjoyed.

Jack, meanwhile, with his hands in his pockets, complacently watched the little comedy of his wife's success. It was very natural that "fellows" should admire her, and, doubtless, envy him. At the same time, as the prize was already won, as he had secured his "innings" beyond the utmost ambition of the rest of the world, he was disinclined to enter the lists on a level with his wife's more recent adorers; so he used to smoke his pipe and watch proceedings in the most approved matrimonial fashion, or stroll away to have a chat with one of the sailors.

"Isn't it an odd thing?" he said one day, when he came back to his wife's side, "there's a fellow on board who came over to England with me. A capital fellow he is, too. I took an awful fancy to him as we came home. Knows an immensity about the country and farming and that sort of thing. It's quite a treat to talk to him."

"What's his name, and why haven't we seen him?" asked his wife.

"His name's Dilworth, and you're not likely to have noticed him. He's not a first-class passenger."

"Oh!" said Kate, opening her eyes, "is he very poor then?"

"I don't know; I should rather think not. I fancy he's been a farmer out there; but he seems to have gone in for a good deal of up-country travelling in his time."

"Is he—a gentleman?"

"Well, I suppose not; no, not what you would call so. But a very nice fellow all the same."

Kate showed no further curiosity in her husband's new, or old, acquaintance. He did not belong to her world evidently. Farming and up-country travelling might be interesting to Jack, but did not seem to her attractive topics of conversations. Nevertheless she was not to remain long a stranger to Mr. Dilworth.

In the midst of the monotony of life on board ship considerable excitement was caused by the successful attempt to catch a shark, which had

followed the ship for a couple of days, to the great uneasiness of the crew. All the passengers crowded to watch the event, and Kate among them.

"What a big man there is in the boat with the sailors," she remarked to her husband, "and he seems the most active of all."

"Oh, that's Dilworth. He's always to the front when anything's going forward," Jack answered.

Kate watched him with more interest than she had felt before, and she soon had an opportunity of speaking to him.

The dead shark was hauled on deck, and the ladies crowded round to look and shudder. Henry Dilworth stood by, answering questions and making an occasional remark. He seemed interested in the interest they showed, and inclined to enlighten their ignorance by some intelligent information. They, on the other hand, regarded the whole scene as a show got up for their amusement, and Henry Dilworth as the showman.

Kate was, as usual, a prominent figure among the others, full of curiosity, and making disjointed inquiries of every sort; while Agnes stood shrinking behind her, gazing in turn at the fish and its captor, as if she regarded them equally as wonders. Henry Dilworth looked down on the shark, his hands in his pockets, the tallest man present, half-a-head taller than Jack, who was nevertheless a fine, well-built young fellow.

"He's an ugly beast," he remarked, giving the shark a slight touch with his foot; "one of the nastiest there is. He's an enemy no man can have a fellow-feeling for. Yet he can't help it, poor creature! How's he to live else?"

Kate listened, glancing at him with a kind of impersonal observation, which did not commit her to any recognition; then she looked at her husband, shrugged her pretty shoulders and remarked, just as if he had been speaking last, "He'd far better die; why should he live? *Je n'en vois pas la nécessité*," as that Frenchman said, you know."

Henry Dilworth's eyes fell upon her; if he was a personality whom she declined to recognize, she was a phenomenon he did not understand. She belonged to a phase of life which he had never cared to study. Nevertheless there was something in her deliberate way of watching and listening to him, only to address a reply to some one else, which made a decided impression on him. He was too indifferent to feel hurt; but he seemed to have received his dismissal, therefore he gave that one silent glance and walked away.

Jack was not quite so pleased with his wife's vivacity as usual.

"Why did you do that, Kate?" he asked.

"I?" she said, lifting her eyebrows. "I did nothing."

"It was a very impressive sort of nothing. Why did you speak French, for one thing? Dilworth doesn't understand it, of course. I don't think you were quite polite to him. He's not a showman, you know."

"Who said he was, you cross creature? I wouldn't be *rude*, of course, to any one; but why should I be *polite* to that sort of man? He doesn't expect it."

"For your own satisfaction, I should think."

"Well, I will in future," Kate answered, taking

her rebuke gaily, "as he seems to be such a friend of yours; and all the more as he's a very handsome man of his kind, which you never mentioned to us."

"Do you call him handsome?" Agnes asked. "He's so very big!"

"Little simpleton!" Kate retorted, pinching her sister's cheek. "You think because you're small yourself that nobody who's big can be good-looking. Now, I call this man—what's his name? Dilworth—this Mr. Dilworth, simply splendid. You do see that type sometimes among common men."

"I shouldn't call him exactly a common man," Jack protested, for he had taken a greater liking to his rough friend than to his wife's polite admirers. "I should say that on the whole he's very uncommon."

"It's much the same thing," Kate declared; "common or uncommon. He's not *usual*; he's not what we've all been taught to be from our earliest years upwards."

"If you mean that he can't speak foreign tongues," Jack began, and his wife laughingly put in the exclamation—"Oh, how spiteful you are! I would never have married you if I'd known it."

"You are probably right," he went on gravely. "But I call his manners really good—not of the drawing-room sort, of course."

"Hardly," Kate answered drily. "I wonder what Susie would say, for example, if you invited him to dinner?"

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY DILWORTH'S PAST.

KATE was never willing to acknowledge herself in the wrong, even to Jack, whose judgment had been proved so superior to that of the rest of the world by his choice of a wife. She never yielded a battle, but she changed her ground as soon as the contest was over, when she thought that her movements were unobserved. She was too fond of Jack, and too anxious that he should think all she did admirable, not to mould her actions unconsciously to his opinions, however she might verbally oppose them.

Therefore, on the next occasion when she met Mr. Dilworth, she was very gracious to him, a little too much so for perfect politeness perhaps (the politeness in which there is no kind of condescension), but her husband was easily pleased and did not detect the shade too much in her manner; while the meaning of it altogether escaped Henry Dilworth himself, in his social ignorance and indifference.

He was a man who had never visited in that world to which Kate belonged. His life had been full of work, and his mind was full of simple ambitions. He was a working-man of a class not uncommon in our time, for his ideas and chosen pursuits were on a level with those of highly educated men, and yet he made no effort and had no desire to escape from the sphere to which he naturally belonged. His interest in the objects of his pursuit was intense and simple, not secondary to any desire for fame or longing for social success; he pursued knowledge (the knowledge to which he was attracted) for its own sake, and not as a

stepping-stone to personal advantage. Therefore, if he missed many opportunities of gain, he escaped many chances of slight; his simplicity and single-mindedness made his happiness, and had, so far, insured his success. A mind at ease to follow the higher objects of ambition works more powerfully than a mind fretted by lesser aims and conscious of personal humiliations. He was unencumbered by family ties, physically strong, mentally quiet. It was not therefore wonderful that in his battle with the world he had so far had the best of it. He had emigrated early, had undergone a period of hard work and bitter privation in the mere effort to earn a living, but had found himself before he was thirty years old a successful and, comparatively speaking, free man.

His occupations had afforded him much opportunity for the study of natural history; he had read largely on this subject and on that of travel and geographical discovery. With comparative leisure at his disposal he turned his energies into the direction of exploration of unknown tracts of country, and observation of the animal kingdom.

There had been one break in the loneliness of his life, when he married a pleasant country girl—a farmer's daughter—whose healthy industry and cheerful temper were her principal attractions. He had not attempted to introduce her to his special pursuits: he had never demanded sympathy with regard to these, nor desired admiration for his achievements. And his wife had considered it a very harmless weakness on his part that he should make journeys up country from time to time to discover the source of a stream, or some other useless phenomenon; so long as he did not neglect his work and showed himself capable and industrious in the management of it. Also the books which he pored over in the evening, making notes of his own on the margin, attracted but little of her attention or curiosity. She did not know probably how expensive they were, and if she had done so, would not have protested against this one feature of extravagance in the conduct of a man so thrifty and self-denying as her husband. Poring over books and making futile journeys were regarded as her husband's harmless hobbies. Sometimes indeed the journeys were difficult and dangerous enough, and Henry Dilworth came back from them gaunt, thin, and worn-out. She nursed him back to strength on these occasions, and reproved him a little.

"Isn't there work enough on the farm, lad, that thou mun knock theeself up for what's good for nought when it's done?" she would ask him.

But a day or two of rest always put him right again, and he never swerved in this pursuit of the knowledge he loved best.

After three years of married life his wife was taken from him by one of those swift illnesses which make sudden tragedies in common-place lives. After her death, Henry Dilworth formed no new domestic ties. She had given him no children, and the fact that he had once been married seemed to have disposed of that sort of experience for ever for him, and to have left him more fixedly lonely than if he had been still a bachelor. He grieved over the loss of her who had been a kind and pleasant companion; but his healthy and active nature—uncultivated in habits of introspection, in the nursing and cherishing of grief

by observation, contemplation and analysis—received no permanent shock from this trouble; the wound healed, and he became cheerful as before. Perhaps he was a little more helpful to others, and at the same time a little more unreserved in his devotion to his favourite pursuits; as a man could afford to be who held his life, as it were, in his own hands, and involved no other creature in his failure or success.

He was at this time over forty years of age, and a prosperous man. He had command of more money than he cared to spend on himself, for he had never altered his simple habits, nor indulged in personal luxuries. He was, therefore, free to dispense money largely in certain directions and on special occasions; and his social position was somewhat a mystery to his fellow-passengers. He did not travel first-class; his clothes were rough, though good; yet he had books in his possession which it would have emptied a poor man's pocket to purchase; and when a charitable subscription was got up on behalf of the widow of a sailor, killed by a fall from the mast-head, Henry Dilworth gave three times as much as any one else on board.

"Is he rich, do you think, or is he poor? I can't make him out," said Kate to her husband.

"Rich, I should say, for a man with his habits," her husband replied; "poor probably, if he had the good fortune to marry a wife like you."

"But why doesn't he change his habits?" said Kate; "travel first-class, and get other clothes?"

"I suppose he doesn't care to."

"Oh, but every one must care to be comfortable and—*nice*."

"Perhaps he cares for other things more," suggested Jack; "and if he's to go any more of these journeys I heard him telling you about, it's as well that he shouldn't learn to feel more comfortable on a feather-bed than on the hard ground."

"But why does he go those journeys? I don't understand; I never heard of him. He doesn't write or anything of the sort."

"He wants to find out for himself, I suppose."

"For *himself*? What's the use, if no one hears of it?" protested Kate; for in those days Mr. Smiles had not made it fashionable to admire scientific cobblers and geological bakers, as we have all learned to do since.

Kate found Mr. Dilworth very pleasant, however, though he was so incomprehensible, not to say impossible. She supposed that there was some explanation of his proceedings, not revealed to her; that some one paid him for the journeys, for instance. He was so strong, helpful, and pleasant, that he became gradually known as a useful man to every one on board. He was never obtrusive, because he had no object in making acquaintance with any one who did not desire it; but he was a person from whom it was easy and pleasant to obtain assistance. The captain and sailors looked upon him with as much favour as the passengers, as a man very slow to offer help, and very safe to rely upon for it.

He was very pleasant to talk to also, though he knew nothing of conversation as an art. His experiences had been various and interesting; he

discouraged upon them freely when encouraged to do so; he found it as natural to give information as to seek it or receive it; but always for the primary reason, that information is valuable and interesting, not for the secondary one of enhancing his own importance or flattering that of others.

He looked younger than his forty-two years. The absence of mental worry and the enjoyment of congenial pursuits had preserved his fresh and healthy appearance, in spite of hardships voluntarily or involuntarily undergone in the past. The expression of quiet power, of restful capacity, in his face made it a pleasant one to look at, for any one understanding it; and he had the gentleness of manner which is a natural accompaniment of strength and simplicity. Of consciously-acquired polish he had none; his manners were only good in the sense that they were never bad; the natural good taste which frequently accompanies a mind of a high order had freed him, without conscious effort, from any disagreeable habit of his class. The small laws of etiquette, which society has found it necessary to impose on itself for its own well-being were not, indeed, within his cognizance, and he would not have done any of the right things in a drawing-room on a festive occasion. Happily no one had ever seen him in a drawing-room in the past, and he did not seem likely to enter one in the future. He was on his way back to the rough dwelling, which stood to him for a home, where he would transact business with a far-seeing and home-keeping "partner," who was glad to carry out the schemes set in motion by Henry Dilworth before; and then he would once more go "up country" to satisfy his mind about a lost river, which he was determined to find out and understand.

Meanwhile, he took the varieties of intercourse on board ship as he took all other experiences, easily, without unnecessary forethought or reflection.

When Kate chose to amuse herself by his conversation, he was ready to be amusing, though he did not always see why she laughed at experiences not in themselves ridiculous. She made a favourable report of his intelligence to her husband.

"Such an interesting man your friend, Mr. Dilworth, is! Those common—I mean those uncommon—men often are. There was a boatman at Keswick who knew the oddest things—about eagles and—and some other sort of bird—I forget what."

Agnes attached even less personality than her sister to this new acquaintance of theirs. He was to her purely a phenomenon of the moment and of the life they were then leading on board ship. He was like the mast, or the sails, or the sailors themselves in their characteristic costumes, whom she knew, indeed, to be men with private existences, but never thought of as such. They were all features of the scene, patches of colour on a moving background. The animate and inanimate objects of this ocean transit held a more confused position in her mind than she was at all aware of.

Possibly if she had shown a more personal interest in their fellow-traveller, Kate would have felt it her duty to be on less friendly terms with him. She did indeed keep a measure of distance

which he was not aware of. She never spoke of her own home, of her own people, and he never made reference to his. His private life, his relatives, his companions, were facts which she chose to be ignorant of: it was only his "adventure," which interested her, as she might have been interested in the yarn of a sailor. To Agnes they were little more than fairy tales or stories from "books," which need have no connection with reality. Experiences of hunger and thirst, of solitude in the desert, of hardship, fatigue, and privation, these could never be, she thought, realities to her; could never be actual factors in her life, any more than the giants of fable. Only one of Henry Dilworth's stories touched her with a sense of reality, and this filled her with shuddering disgust. It was the history of the loss of a favourite dog, and was told in connection with the death of the shark. The noble animal had saved his master's life at the cost of its own by plunging into the water when he was swimming on another occasion to escape a shark; the shark had seized the dog, and the man had reached the land.

"I shall never forget it," he said, "I see it all over again when I look at the water on a calm day; the poor fellow being dragged under, and the look in his eyes as he went down. And I could do nothing—nothing, except make his sacrifice useless by becoming one myself. It is a painful recollection. It is not pleasant to think of having cost so much to any creature that cared for one like that."

"Why did you tell us such a story?" said Agnes, with a shiver. "I would rather not have known it."

He looked at her with surprise, for she seldom spoke to him.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I didn't think of that."

"I have seen a shark, and I can imagine how it was," she went on; "I would rather not have known it. I might fall overboard myself, or Kate, and then—I think you should not have told us," she said, with decision.

This outbreak of feeling perplexed Henry Dilworth somewhat. Was it selfishness or sympathy? He put it down to sympathy, as the pleasantest solution of the enigma.

(To be continued.)

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION AND ITS PROVERBS.

A GOOD story is told of a gentleman who, having taken to the study of medicine rather late in life, was dining with a friend. During the meal conversation turned on his professional prospect, and his friend asked why, at so mature an age, he thought of entering the medical profession. "There is an old proverb," the gentleman replied smiling, "at forty a man must be either a fool or a physician."

"True," admitted his friend, "but don't you think he may be both?"

This latter suggestion has some colour lent to it by Professor Huxley, who relates how, when a surgeon famous, some years ago, being irritated by the pretensions of physicians, was asked if he

meant to bring up his boy to his own calling replied—

"No, my son is such a fool I mean to make a physician of him."

These are not the only anecdotes extant which bear rather hardly upon the professors of the healing art; a hundred others might be quoted, and almost as many sayings the frequent utterance of which has rendered them almost proverbial. In the present paper it is proposed to select a few from the numerous anecdotes which, originating doubtless in good natured banter, appear to cast a slur upon the physician's honourable calling. Many of the stories in existence excite a grim smile. Thus a doctor once upbraiding a workman for the scandalous manner in which certain gaspipes had been laid down in front of his house, was met by the following reply:

"Ah, doctor!" apologized the man, "mine are not the only mistakes the earth covers."

So when a certain Irish physician was dining a company of friends, amongst whom sat Theodore Hook, and remarked—

"I should like to place over my door an inscription either in Latin or Greek, borrowed from one of the great authors."

The wit suggested—

"Give Italian the preference: nothing can equal that verse of Dante's—'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.'"

This touch of the clever humourist is on a par with the "epitaph for a physician," which is ascribed to Swift, "*si monumentum quereris circumspice*." Such sayings as these are hard upon the profession in the mouths of the laity, but still harder when coming from medical men themselves. Yet Sir Astley Cooper, the eminent surgeon, has not scrupled to openly describe the science of medicine as one founded upon conjecture and built up on murder.

The quotation, "Throw physic to the dogs," from Shakespeare has passed into a proverb, and many other expressions similarly antagonistic to professors of the healing art might be picked at random from the works of the poets. The proverbial philosophy of Europe generally, and of Spain in particular, teems with shafts of ridicule hurled against the medical profession. Thus in Italy they have amongst others a well-known saying, which may be translated, "If the doctor cures, the sun sees it; if he kills, the earth hides it." In Austria another, "Bleed him, purge him, and if he dies bury him," also "the doctor's mistakes are not the only ones hidden by the earth." The German wit says—"Physic always does good, if not to the patient, at least to the apothecary." In France, as well as in England, the young medico just qualified is spoken of as "licensed to kill." The Russian has it, "the doctor seldom takes physic;" and the Spaniard carries a whole host of such proverbial aphorisms on the tip of his tongue, of which it is only necessary to quote a few. "The earth covers the mistakes of the physician." "The doctor is to be feared more than the disease." "Physic is a curse to humanity." "It is God that cures, the doctor that gets the money"; and lastly, a common piece of advice in both Spain and Portugal is, "If you have a friend who is a doctor, take off your hat to him and send him to the house of your enemy."

Many again are the libellous anecdotes related

of members of the medical profession in all countries, and daily is the camel's load being added to. To enter fully into this new branch of the subject, however, would be beyond the scope of the present paper, though one or two from the more recent examples may be given. "It is a wise doctor who keeps his temper, a wiser who keeps his *patience* (patients)," lately remarked a comic contemporary. When some one said inadvertently that a certain person had died "without the aid of a physician," he saw at once that he had done injustice to a noble profession, and added, "but such instances are of very rare occurrence."

"Six of the fever patients have died, sir," said a hospital nurse to the physician, as he went his rounds.

"Why I wrote medicine for seven," mused the doctor, passing on into another ward.

"Yes, but one of them wouldn't take his," replied the nurse.

So, when at a radical gathering a group of idlers were discussing politics and the many changes produced in public opinion, one of them said—

"Well, I never cry 'Long live anybody.'"

A bystander remarked—

"Then you, sir, must be a doctor."

"When a man dies suddenly, without having been attended by a doctor," says a popular guide to the law, "the coroner has to be called in and an inquest held, to ascertain the cause of death."

"But," adds the sarcastic reader, "when he dies, after having been attended by a doctor, then *everybody knows why he died*, and an inquest is not necessary."

For the example next given a German newspaper is responsible. It takes the form of a dialogue:—

CHILD.—"Herr Pastor, my mother sends me to tell you that father died to-night."

PASTOR.—"Did you send round for the doctor?"

CHILD.—"No, Herr Pastor, father died of himself."

With which crushing example of native wit, it is our intention to close the present paper, merely in conclusion, quoting the following extract, perhaps the greatest libel ever penned of an honourable profession, from a very old number of the *Spectator*.

"The medical profession," says the writer, universal in his comprehensiveness, "may be compared to a British Army, in Cæsar's time—some of them stay in chariots and some on foot. If the infantry do less execution than the charioteers, it is because they cannot be so soon carried into all quarters of town, and *dispatch* so much business in so short a time. Besides this body of regular troops, there are stragglers who, without being duly enlisted and enrolled, do infinite mischief to those who are so unlucky as to fall into their hands." Yet the profession still lives and flourishes.

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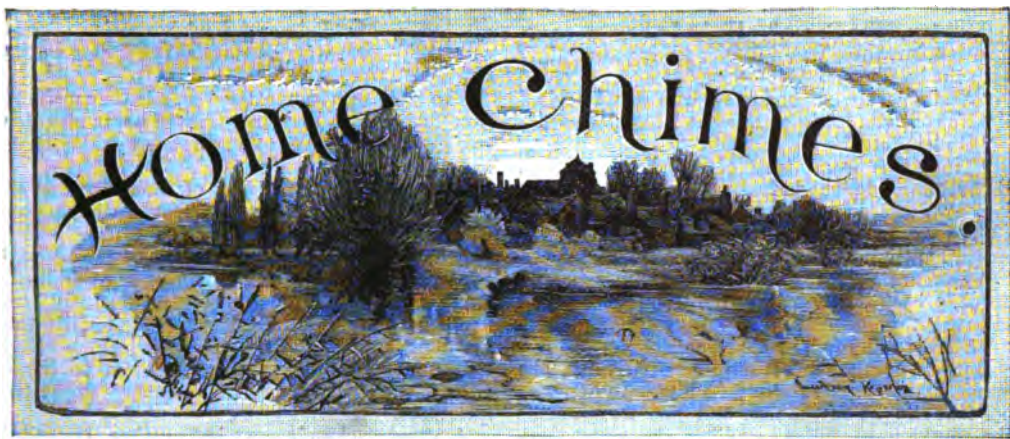
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 13.]

LONDON: MARCH 28, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

UNDER A SUNNY SKY.

BY HUGH COLEMAN DAVIDSON.

IT was a warm Saturday in July.

On the East, there was a long bristling promontory; on the West, a range of scraggy rocks; in the centre, a wide bay with a low pebble-fringed shore. Grasslands and meadows undulated almost to the water's edge, except where the grey houses clustered lovingly around the old castle. In the background there was a chain of mountains, stretching away into the far North.

Towards the horizon the water was of a deep glistening blue, but nearer the coast it varied from light green to dark purple, according as the bottom consisted of sand or seaweed. It was also veined in every direction by glassy streaks of current, and marked here and there by dark patches swiftly gliding away from the land. Though the sky overhead was cloudless, the mountains had donned their nightcaps, which of course signified their readiness to deliver a curtain-lecture.

But under the lee of the houses there was scarcely a breath of wind, and the smoke, exhaled by the fishermen lounging on the quay, ascended in parallel lines.

The town had two harbours, the inner being used chiefly by sailing vessels and the outer by rowing boats. The latter was enclosed between the Old Pier—a short dilapidated extension of the quay—and the New Pier, which stood on the seaward side of the other and gradually curved round upon it.

The New Pier was built of large blocks of limestone. It was protected by a high wall, with a continuous step running along the greater part of its length, so as to enable people to look over towards the entrance of the bay; there was a lighthouse on the raised platform at its extremity, and it had a row of stone pillars for mooring boats, and several sets of steps leading down to the harbour.

The castle clock was striking three when a girl

of about eighteen passed along the the quay and emerged upon the pier. She wore a dress of blue serge and a coquettish straw hat. There was a shawl over her arm, and in her hand she carried a mackerel-line. Her figure was short and slim; her face decidedly pretty, with a merry saucy look in the mischievous dark eyes, the dimpled cheeks, and even the nose, which was rather a pug—or, perhaps, *retroussée* would sound better.

She stood for a moment looking about her.

The following day being Sunday, the inner harbour was tightly packed with vessels which had finished their fishing for the week, and a Cornish dandy and a Manx nickey had been obliged to take up their quarters among the gaudy small fry moored between the two piers. The vessels had already been made snug, and were apparently deserted. In most cases, the nets had been carted away to the fields to dry, but a few were spread over the stonework so as to cover it almost completely. The fishermen were gathered in groups, talking Irish, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, Gaelic, and several other tongues more difficult to name; a number of boys were fishing off the pier-head, and several quaint old dames were "sunning themselves" in their doorways.

But the girl's business was evidently with none of these. By the side of the steps near the lighthouse, there was some one hoisting a lug on a Norwegian skiff. As soon as she saw him she began to pick her way over the nets very carefully, for fear of tearing them or tripping.

A tall broad shouldered man, with a pleasant sunburnt face, strode out from behind one of the groups of fishermen. He stretched out both his hands as if to stop her.

"Tiny," he said entreatingly.

Though it was impossible to repress the mischief lurking in her eyes, she pursed up her dainty lips and answered severely—

"Mr. Palmer, I'll thank you to address me by my proper name, and—and to behave as much as possible like a dignified gentleman."

"I'll try, Miss Bruce." He had a humorous expression, but there was a deeper feeling struggling with the humour now.

"And now, sir, be good enough to stand aside."

"Not till you have heard what I have to say."

"Oh! indeed."

"Tiny, this is all tomfoolery," he exclaimed, almost laughing, she looked so sweetly aggravating. "You are just to turn back with me at once. I'll send a message to that idiot yonder." He jerked his thumb at the man in the skiff.

"You are very fond of calling names behind people's backs, Mr. Palmer; I wonder what you call me?"

"Shall I tell you," he asked eagerly.

But dropping her assumption of dignity, she made an attempt to slip past him. In doing so her foot caught in the net, and but for his arms she would have fallen. When she once more stood before him, her pretty face was flushed with vexation, though the fishermen did not trouble to turn their heads.

"Let me pass this moment," she said, with a stamp of the foot.

"Tiny, listen to me! That fellow Hunt doesn't know the difference between the bow and the stern of a boat." He spoke with the utmost scorn. No ignorance could, in George Palmer's eyes, be more contemptible. "Look at the way he is bungling with the lug! It would be laughable, if only we could cut his claws. Heaven help you, Tiny, if you go to sea with Gilbert Hunt!"

She was smiling at him now.

"Oh! but I mean to go. So George—I mean, Mr. Palmer—you may talk from now to midnight if you like. There, sir!"

"Then you'll be drowned for a moral. The skiff has been capsized twice already. She is the crankiest boat in the harbour; she hasn't an ounce of ballast in her; and the wind is sure to be puffy out in the bay."

"You are a most disagreeable person. Why didn't you lend us your own boat, then, Mr. Dog-in-the-Manger?"

"Because I have some respect for your life. Hunt would capsize a man-of-war, if he only got the chance."

"I hope when next we meet, you may have a better word for him," said Tiny grandly, and passed on.

George called after her softly, "I am going straight up to your people. I feel it my duty as a friend to prepare them for the worst."

She turned round with flashing eyes. Oh, how angry she looked! And perhaps a little fearful. "If you dare, sir!" she cried, shaking her finger at him. "Only do that, and I'll never speak to you again. Never—never—never, Mr. Palmer. So remember! Just breathe one syllable, and—oh, George, you never would be so cruel, surely."

Her voice had suddenly changed, and she was coming back to him with her old coaxing ways.

"Oh! but think how miserable it would make the dear old mother until I returned. No, George, you won't, I'm sure, for you are a nice good fellow—at times."

"But I will," said he, retreating playfully as she advanced.

"Then I hate you. Yes, I positively loathe you, you nasty, mean, jealous thing. Ugh! Good

afternoon, Mr. Palmer; I wish you joy of your errand." And, with a grand curtsey, she walked off.

The fact of the matter was, a little consideration had shown her that George never meant to carry out his threat; otherwise she would scarcely have left him so readily.

Tiny was not in the best of tempers when she descended the steps where the skiff was moored. She was angry with George for his opposition, which she felt absolutely compelled her to forego her womanly privilege of changing her mind, and angry with Gilbert for knowing so absurdly little about a boat. She tried to persuade herself that her danger existed only in George's jealous imagination; but, failing in this, prepared to harass Gilbert with all sorts of unpleasantly suggestive questions.

A slender, handsome, but rather conceited-looking young man stood up in the skiff to hand her to a seat. She tossed down her mackerel line and gave him her shawl.

"Are you sure it's quite safe?" she asked.

"Safe! Has that raven Palmer been croaking again?"

"George is not a raven," replied Tiny tartly. "He knows far more about a boat than you do, Gilbert. Indeed, there's not a sailor in the harbour knows as much as he does. Oh! you may look indignant, sir, but it's true."

"Haden't you better ask him to take my place?"

"Perhaps I had." She pretended to move off.

"Come here, Tiny," he cried. "I can manage all right. If I don't bring you back as dry as you are now, I'll never speak to you again. Why, the sea is like a mill-pond."

"But you've no ballast," said she with an air of authority.

However, he at last persuaded her to trust herself in his hands.

She sat near the mast and he in the stern by the tiller. Then the rope was cast loose, and the skiff began to swing round the pier-head. The wind was light and fitful, and presently a puff caught the lugsail aback. Tiny ducked her head just in time to save her hat.

"Oh! this is horrid," she said.

"Take an oar and pull her round," cried a boy from the pier.

Gilbert was white with anger and vexation. It was humiliating to sit there, swaying to and fro, while the sail loudly flapped against the mast and the skiff refused to obey the tiller. He sat bolt upright, trying to look as if it was all right, while Tiny with her hands to her hat crouched beneath the sail.

Another disagreeable remark came from a sailor on the pier-head.

"Hey, Mr. Hunt!" he shouted. "Your rudder's unshipped."

For some time Gilbert pretended indifference—he even began to whistle. But when the cry was taken up by others, Tiny insisted that he should see whether or not it was true. It turned out that the rudder actually was unshipped; at least, it was hanging merely from the top hook.

While this matter was being rectified, George, who had joined the group on the pier, called out to offer his boat. It was scornfully declined. Tiny's experience had already brought repentance and

she would gladly have accepted it, but Gilbert would not hear of such an ignominious proceeding.

Though a good-hearted fellow on the whole, he apparently considered the handling of a boat to be a mere matter of intuition, common to the human race, but especially well-developed in himself. In this, no doubt, he was not singular. The class of intuitive sailors and oarsmen is tolerably large; you need go no farther than Richmond or Ramsgate to see hundreds of specimens. At any rate, they teach one useful lesson: that drowning is not so easy as might appear on the surface. Veterans talk learnedly about wine and cigars, the two things about which it may confidently be said they are the most ignorant, the frequency of their experiments notwithstanding; younger men who have perhaps puddled a punt across a duckpond, fancy themselves qualified to command a full-rigged barque. This was Gilbert Hunt's style.

The rudder was soon put right, the skiff's head came round to the wind, and she gradually forged ahead, scarcely heeling at all to the light puffs from the shore.

George was still watching with a troubled face, not free from angry impatience.

"Hunt," he cried, through a speaking trumpet formed by his hands, "keep the sheet in your hand and be ready to let go. Confound the idiot!" added he between his clenched teeth.

Annoyed at receiving a lesson in public, which is never more exasperating than when it is deserved, Gilbert was deliberately belaying the sheet. He did it most ostentatiously, holding the end of the rope in the air. Then he turned round and with mock politeness took off his hat to George.

It is almost needless to say that both men were in love with Tiny Bruce, whom they had known from childhood and always called by her pet name. She teased, quarrelled with, and cajoled them by turns, and her impartiality was at once distressing and puzzling. Outsiders declared that George was the favourite, and they are generally supposed to see most of the game.

This morning, however, Tiny and George had had one of their most desperate quarrels. With her usual impudence she had asked him to lend her his boat, so that she and Gilbert might go for a sail together, and he had flatly declined to allow her to commit suicide, as he expressed it. It was just like his nastiness, she said; and then went off and told Gilbert to borrow another boat.

As we already know, he got the skiff. She had been brought over in a Norwegian timbership some twenty years ago, and not a nail had been used in her construction, the planks being riveted with wooden pegs. Old as she was, she had acquired a reputation for anything but a staid demeanour. Indeed the number of her victim's would have put the most fashionable lady to shame.

George watched her progress with the greatest anxiety. Had he followed his inclinations, he would have taken his own boat and paddled about in the Bay so as to be able to render assistance, if necessary; but he was kept from doing so by the knowledge that his act would be set down as a piece of jealous espionage, and also by some legal business which demanded his presence in the country. He took a last lingering look at the skiff, glanced apprehensively at the cloud-capped hills, and then with a sigh turned and left the pier.

Meanwhile Tiny and Gilbert had recovered their spirits. The sea was so calm, the air so warm, and the breeze so gentle that it was difficult to believe in the presence of danger; and in the genial sunshine their troubles were speedily forgotten. He sat in the centre and she to windward; in this way they kept the skiff on an even keel. They were approaching the edge of the bay, and would soon be sailing under the range of rocks that formed its western horn. Outside of them there was a broad silvery belt of current, running away eastward. The white sails of a schooner were glistening upon the horizon, but not another vessel was in sight.

"This is simply delicious," said Tiny, trailing her hand in the water. "What nonsense George talked, to be sure! Oh, just do look at those sweet seaweeds down there, and—oh—oh—oh—the fish!—swarms of them, Gilbert."

Fortunately he was wise enough to keep his seat.

"Palmer fancies his seamanship immensely," said he, stroking his moustache complacently; "but I think we might teach him a trick or two, Tiny."

"He has made a mistake, that's all."

"But then he never does make a mistake, according to his own account."

"Gilbert, I shall begin to dislike you in a moment. Do you think, you illogical person, that the best way to raise yourself in my estimation is to run other people down? Because it isn't. Shall I put out the line now? Oh! how I should like to do something to surprise them all: catch a cartload of fish, or—Do suggest something, Gilbert."

"Wait till we get outside of the bay. Under the Head is the best place."

They arrived there in another quarter of an hour.

And a dangerous spot it is, with the wind off the land. Without casting a shadow upon the sea, without the smallest warning of any sort, the squalls drop from the cliffs upon a luckless craft like a gannet upon a herring.

Before Tiny could get her line out, one of these squalls swooped down upon the skiff and laid her over until her side was level with the water, which at once began to pour over the gunwale. Tiny clutched the mast and uttered a piteous little scream; but as soon as she realized the danger, a brave look came into her pretty pale face, and she did her utmost to control her quivering lips.

The boat went over so gradually that a very little practical knowledge would have averted the disaster.

But Gilbert lost his head completely. Grasping the gunwale with one hand, he held the rudder immovable with the other, and so never gave the skiff a chance of recovering herself. He made no attempt to unloose the sheet; indeed, he would scarcely have had time. Standing knee-deep in the gurgling water, he seemed to have been turned to stone; and it was not until the sail lay flat upon the surface, and he found himself in a position demanding common sense rather than nautical experience, that he regained his energies. Then he showed himself to be sensible enough.

Tiny was fortunately in the clear space between the bottom of the sail and the boat. She was still holding on to the mast, little more than her

head showing above the sea. Gilbert was supporting himself at the stern.

"Tiny," he said, reassuringly, "there is no danger. The skiff will float like this till we are picked up."

"I don't think I can hold on very long, Gilbert."

He cast a desperate glance at the fading cliffs, nearly half a mile distant, but it was a bleak, lonely spot, quite deserted. The schooner was scarcely visible upon the horizon, and not another sail was in sight. No help could be expected from that quarter. The only thing in their favour was the calmness of the sea, in which the gulls and kittiwakes were floating in white and grey patches.

Gilbert pulled out his watch. It had stopped at five o'clock. Three hours to sunset, then, and the tide already running rapidly eastward, so as to sweep them across the entrance to the bay, and perhaps in sight of some one on shore. When he had ascertained this, he cautiously worked his way round until he arrived opposite Tiny.

"Oh, Gilbert, this is too dreadful!" she said, with a brave attempt at a smile, which brought the tears into his eyes. "What will the poor old mother say when she hears about it all? I don't know—I can't think—I don't like to think. Isn't the water frightfully cold?" Her face was blue, and her teeth were chattering already.

"You poor little thing! We must try and get you up here"—he laid his hand on the gunwale. "I think it will support your weight."

It was a difficult thing to do, hampered as they were by the sail, and also by their wet, clinging clothes; but at last Tiny was perched on the side of the capsized skiff, her hands clasping it firmly, and her feet resting on the mast in the water. From this position she was able to scan the sea far and wide. Alas! its sheeny surface was unbroken by anything larger than a long-necked cormorant. With a shiver, she glanced down at Gilbert's wistful face.

"Not a sign of a boat anywhere," she said.

"Oh, but there will be soon. Look how fast we are moving."

He pointed to the rocks. By marking two in a straight line with themselves, it was easy to see that they were gradually creeping along the coast. They watched their progress with intense interest and in silence; there was nothing else for them to do. If only the current would bring them within reach of the cliffs! Surely they were drifting nearer! Half an hour made it quite certain, and a happy, hopeful light flashed into Tiny's eyes, only to die out a few minutes later.

The shore was receding again. The current had taken a turn under the Head, and was sweeping them out to sea. They would pass the bay at such a distance that they could not possibly be observed from the harbour.

"Gilbert," faltered Tiny, "you must leave me and swim ashore before it's too late."

"Tiny!"

"Oh, but it wouldn't be desertion at all. You can't do me any good by remaining here, and then you might bring help, you know. So do go! And don't tell them what has happened, unless it's quite, quite certain. Oh, Gilbert! it seems so hard to die—to die in a smiling sea, under a sunny sky!"

He could only stammer out—

"Tiny, I won't leave you. I daren't run the risk of living, and letting you—I can't even say it," added he, thickly. "If it must be, then we will go together." The lover's face brightened for a moment. He could find consolation even in this. If death was inevitable, what sweeter way than with Tiny in his arms?

It was a selfish fancy, no doubt, but when was love anything else?

Two hours afterwards they returned to the same subject. They were opposite the town, but upwards of three miles from it, and at least a mile outside the bay. The schooner was still hull down: not a boat anywhere; only ever and anon a gull screaming by above their heads. The breeze, after following the sun round a few points, had dropped almost entirely, and the sea was a burnished mirror, reflecting the gold and crimson glory of the sunset. Even the purple shadows on the distant cliffs looked beautiful; but for these poor, shivering beings clinging to the skiff there was in the beauty a cruel mockery. They were numbed and stiff, and utterly miserable, the cold having deprived them of their last remnant of courage.

"Tiny," said Gilbert desperately, "perhaps—perhaps, we mayn't be picked up, after all. Will you forgive me?"

"For an accident? But indeed you couldn't help it."

"And, Tiny, will you do something else? Will you say that you do love me—just a little?" added he, entreatingly, seeing a doubtful shadow come into her pinched, white face.

It was a great temptation to give the poor fellow what little happiness lay in her power, and yet she felt that, if there was one time more than another when it was necessary to speak the truth, it was now. No, she could not do it.

"I do like you very, very much, but—"

His head drooped, and he sighed wearily. He felt that his cup was full to the brim. A painful silence fell upon both.

But presently Tiny took up *her* vein of thought.

"Gilbert," she began in a trembling whisper, "if you should be saved, and I not—"

"But I won't."

"But if you should," she persisted, "will you tell my darling mother that I thought of her at the last? And, Gilbert"—she looked at him hesitatingly—"will you—do you mind telling George that I was sorry for calling him—There! he will understand."

He winced at this, but eventually promised.

She went on thoughtfully:—"And will you say that I wish my watch to be given to Hilda?"

The calmness with which she made her preparations for death was horrible to the man who had been accustomed to see only a merry, mischievous girl—a pretty butterfly. It terrified him into action.

"I'm going to make an attempt to right the skiff," cried he, desperately. "What an idiot I am not to have thought of it before. Why, if I unstep the mast, she will right of herself. It's only the sail that keeps her down."

"Are you quite sure, Gilbert?" she asked, timidly.

Poor Tiny had reached the stage of exhaustion

which, being insensible to hope, considers any effort a useless trouble. She wanted merely to sit still and wait for the end.

"Only think for a moment!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "Out comes the mast; the skiff, released from the pressure of the sail, floats upright; we get in and bail. Cheer up, Tiny! in another ten minutes we shall be sailing homeward."

She smiled down at him, but very feebly.

"Now sit firm," he continued, lowering himself until only his head appeared above the surface. "The boat will roll over in that direction, and you must raise yourself by your hands so as to stand on your feet. Come more forward! There, that will do."

He paused, and then added: "Are you sure there is no boat to be seen?"

She looked round before replying: "Not one."

The sun was just sinking behind the mountains when Gilbert commenced his task, so the time was exactly eight o'clock. They had been drifting about for three miserable hours.

His hands were so numbed that he had the greatest difficulty in withdrawing the nail which secured the iron ring round the mast. When he had accomplished this, he placed his feet against the seat and began to tug at the mast, which was much swollen by the water. It came out slowly at first, and then with a sudden start.

What followed might have been anticipated, plausible as Gilbert's plan looked in theory.

While he was jerked forward on one side, the skiff rolled heavily to the other. It shook off Tiny's feeble grasp and threw her into the sea; lurched back again, settled on an even keel, and finally, being full of water, sank.

Tiny and Gilbert were left struggling in the open sea, with never a soul to lend them a helping hand.

* * * * *

George's business took him longer than he had expected. It was nearly nine o'clock when he re-entered the town. On his way home he had to pass the house where Mrs. Bruce and her two daughters lived, and here he stopped to inquire whether Tiny had returned.

"No, sir," replied the servant, "and mistress is getting uneasy about her."

"I daresay she is at Mrs. Armstrong's," said George. "Don't trouble to tell Mrs. Bruce that I called."

But as soon as he was out of sight, his whole manner changed—he sprang forward like a madman. His eyes ranged wildly hither and thither, looking for some hopeful sign, his teeth were set, his arms swinging, as he strode along the deserted street, his footsteps on the pavement the only sound that broke the leaden silence.

On a fine summer evening the townspeople often gathered on the pier or went paddling about in the Bay; but in the fact that not a person was to be seen, George saw only a confirmation of his worst fears.

Presently he overtook a fisherman hurrying in the same direction as himself.

"Have you heard the news, Master Palmer?"

"News!" gasped George.

"Yes, bad news enough."

"What is it? Great heavens, man, can't you speak?"

"Master Hunt an' Miss Bruce went out in the ould skiff an' they set——"

"I know all that. Are they back?" shouted George.

"No, sir," replied the fisherman, shaking his head gloomily. "An' what's more, Tommy Gale has just been up to the top of the Castle with a telescope, an' he can't see a sign of them anywhere. It's a bad job—very. If——"

But George had dashed off.

The New Pier was so thronged that it was almost impossible to get near the wall, which was lined with men and boys, standing, kneeling, or sitting, and all gazing intently seawards. The platform round the lighthouse was tightly packed; a long row of figures occupied the step; and others stood craning behind, throwing eager questions up to those in front of them. Here and there a stalwart fisherman was the centre of a group of anxious women and children; the latter holding their mother's gowns, sometimes exchanging a timid word with one another, but not daring to raise their voices above a whisper. The conversation was mostly carried on in undertones, and lips quivered when they spoke of "Poor Miss Tiny."

"Get to the boats, you lazy hounds!" shouted George, bursting upon the scene.

On account of his daring and knowledge of everything connected with the sea, the sailors entertained for him a profound respect, difficult for any one unacquainted with the ways of a small seaport to understand. They recognized his authority simply because they knew him to be their superior even in their own trade, and hard words from him they quietly accepted as their due. For precisely the opposite reason, they considered Gilbert Hunt to be beneath contempt.

"Get to the boats, you lazy hounds!" cried George. "What, stand gaping there while people are drowning! Away with you!"

They went like a flock of sheep. In a few minutes every boat in the harbour was being manned.

George ran on to the end of the pier, where his own boat was moored. But before he had descended the steps a sailor, mounted on the wall and holding a telescope, called out to him.

"Can you see anything, Gale?" demanded George.

"Take a look yourself, sir. I can't make out what that schooner yonder is up to. She's been tacking about for the last quarter of an hour in a senseless sort of way. She's got a fresh breeze out there, too."

George clambered up the wall, and took the telescope in his hand.

"She's hove to," he announced presently.

"That's a queer thing," was Gale's comment.

"She is lowering a boat," added George after a pause. "And there goes a signal."

He hastily returned the glass, and dashed off.

Gale kept his place on the wall, whence he watched a score or more of boats racing across the bay. It was a long pull—three miles at least—but the oars tore through the water as if they were only going a hundred yards.

George, who had taken a man with him, soon assumed the lead, and kept it to the end. The others tailed off by degrees.

No words of mine could give any idea of the

painful excitement upon the pier. Tiny had been a favourite with everybody, and the conflict between hope and fear made the long period of suspense almost intolerable. It seemed nearly impossible that she should be saved, floating out there in the lovely, cruel sea, with never a boat in sight. They expected to see only a cold, white face and stiffened form, such as they had often seen before, and shuddered at or wept over; and yet they hoped on. They crowded around Gale, and stood silently, eagerly waiting for the words that he dropped out at intervals. Every change in his weatherworn face was accurately reflected in theirs.

"Master George has reached the schooner," he said.

"Ay, ay."

After a pause he exclaimed—"He is coming back now."

A long silence followed.

"There's some one lying in the bow: it's a man. They've got them both, for I can see another in the stern—a woman, I think."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"Alive, Tommy?" asked a woman, tremulously.

"That I can't say."

He could tell them no more. There was a rush to the pierhead.

At last the boat came within hail.

"Are they safe?" cried a fisherman.

There floated across the sea—

"Both well!"

"Thank God!"

And there went up from all a deep-drawn sigh—almost a sob—of relief, while several of the women were weeping outright.

When George, carrying Tiny in his arms, came up the steps, the crowd formed a long lane on the pier, all peering wistfully at the pale, worn face that tried to smile at her friends, but none uttering a word until the little procession had gone by. It was brought up by Gilbert, supported on each side by a sailor. He did his best to walk and look as if nothing particular had happened, but he could only just stagger along.

The escape of this young couple must be placed among the truths that are stranger than fiction.

The disaster and its happy termination were both due to the same cause—want of ballast. The skiff was so buoyant that, though it sank out of sight, it floated a couple of feet beneath the surface. It was more an accident than anything else that brought Gilbert in contact with it as he was swimming to Tiny's side. Together they stood on the central seat, when, of course, the boat sank considerably lower under their weight. Clinging to one another for mutual support, with barely their heads showing above the chilly water, they drifted about for more than an hour. An awful position truly! But for the absolute calmness of the sea, they must have been swept away; and when a breeze got up overhead, though it raised scarcely a ripple, they thought that the end had come. As it happened, it brought the schooner to their assistance.

Nothing more remains to be told beyond the fact that Tiny recovered after a long illness, and, a year later, married George Palmer.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

CHAPTER V.

A STORMY PRESENT.

AFTERWARDS Agnes spoke of the incident to her brother-in-law.

"I don't think it was nice of your friend to tell us such a horrid tale," she said. "I don't like knowing of dreadful things."

"But you read of them in the papers."

"It's different in *print*. I don't want to hear of them happening to people I talk to. Susie never would allow it."

"Allow the things to happen to the people, do you mean, or you to talk to them afterwards?" he inquired.

"You know what I mean—allow us to know, to be told. She sent away one nurse who had a brother drowned."

"How every inconsiderate of the nurse. Come, Agnes, don't take it so seriously. We are grown up, after all."

"I don't know that Agnes is grown up," said Kate, pinching her sister's cheek according to habit, "and I don't know that I want her to be yet awhile. Why should she?"

"For her own convenience," suggested the practical Jack.

"Oh, as to that, I'm grown-up enough for two, or three, or any number; and you're a greedy Jack, an ill-regulated, unsatisfactory Jack, if you want there to be more than one of me."

"There couldn't," said Jack, "you're a unique production. The world would have to start from the beginning and go through everything again to evolve another like you; and what beats everything is, that I should be the lucky fellow it's all been done for."

This audacious compliment ended the discussion.

Sunshine and pleasant breezes did not last for ever, not even to the end of the voyage. As the ship sailed southwards the weather became cold, and stormy winds arose. Days without sunshine and full of rain followed one another without break. Most of the passengers suffered from sea-sickness; even the light-hearted Kate had to take to her berth, and there bemoan the change of circumstances. She said frankly that she didn't like the bad weather, couldn't endure being ill, and considered that the voyage had lasted long enough. She seemed to expect that Jack should bring it to an abrupt conclusion for her convenience, in some fashion not specified.

Agnes escaped the prevailing malady of sea-sickness, but she was very much frightened by the gale.

Bereft of her sister's company, she did not often venture on deck; when she did so, it was to look timidly at the stormy sky and the darkly tossing waters, over which the ship was driving along in melancholy fashion. Solitude in such a scene filled her with vague alarms; and to be alone with Jack was not altogether pleasant.

She felt that she was not clever enough for his society, and that he might "tease" her.

The gaiety of the life on board was over for every one; the pleasant evenings on deck were abolished; the pretty dresses in which Kate had looked so charming and Agnes so lovely, were put away in favour of warm travelling costumes; and the waterproof cloaks provided by Miss Leslie's carefulness were accepted as the only possible outdoor toilettes for her sisters. Among other pleasant things which the rough weather brought to an abrupt end were the talks on deck with Henry Dilworth.

One afternoon, after a night more stormy than usual, Agnes made her way up into the open air. The noises of the gale had frightened her, the terrible tossing about in the darkness had been full of horror to her: she had feared at every plunge that the ship would sink to rise no more; and now she felt a longing to look at the sky and the water, and the world outside the ship, before the sun went down upon it once again.

"Perhaps I shall see land somewhere," she said to herself, for she did not think of applying geography, any more than other school lessons, to real life; "we must surely be getting near *some* country."

She fancied that Jack was on deck, and that he would join her as soon as she appeared there; but the only things that met her at the top of the steps was a wild gust of wind, which wrenched her hat from her head, and sent it careering over the sea.

She looked around for help, but Jack was not there; the one person close at hand was Henry Dilworth. He seemed to have the run of the vessel now, having made himself too generally useful to be considered in the way anywhere. He came forward, and put out his hand to help Agnes.

"It is rough weather for you up here," he said, "and I'm afraid you won't see your hat again."

"That does not matter," she answered, clinging to the rail, and looking around her in bewilderment. "I ought not to have put it on. Oh, how windy it is! I thought my brother-in-law was here. My sister was not well enough to come up with me, and I wanted some fresh air. But perhaps I had better go down again. It doesn't seem safe."

"Oh, it's safe enough. Give me your hand, and I'll put you where you won't feel the wind so much. That's better, isn't it? It would be a pity to go down again."

"You are very kind. Yes, it's better here. But oh! how rough the water is!" She turned her sweet face to him as she spoke, and looked like a flower beaten and driven by the storm.

She had drawn the hood of her waterproof over her head, and her eyes looked out like a bit of lost summer sky from under the dark folds. Her sweet little mouth drooped wofully at the corners, and the soft outlines of her cheeks, the childlike dimple of her chin, were brought into full relief by her sombre dress and the wild scene around her.

"Is it very dangerous, do you think?" she asked, looking at him wistfully.

"Not at all," he answered cheerfully, "as things are now. Ships are at sea in all sorts of weather, and come home safely."

"I suppose they do," she answered with a sigh, "but not *all* of them. You have been a great deal to sea, have you not? Were you ever in a wreck?"

"Three times."

"Oh!" she answered, in a little tone of horror; "was anybody drowned?"

"Not the first time."

"And the second?"

"Only one man."

"Then people are not *always* drowned when there is a shipwreck? But here I think we should all be. There is no land anywhere."

"There are the boats."

"Oh, the boats! On this dreadful water! Can you swim?"

"Yes."

"That must make you feel safer; but even that would be no use; there is nowhere to swim to here."

"Why should you think of such things?"

"I can't help it. In the night when I am alone, and hear the water, and the dreadful noise as if the ship must come to pieces, I cannot sleep. I am not used to being alone: there was always Kate until she got married. Last night she was good and came to me; I was so dreadfully frightened. I couldn't help crying. That's so foolish, isn't it?" she appealed to him. "Susie would not like it."

"I can't tell, I'm sure," answered Henry Dilworth; "if you can't help it, I suppose it can't be helped."

"It is almost as bad every night," Agnes went on, "and Kate cannot always come. In the daytime she even laughs at me for being afraid; so does Jack. It is dreadful to be afraid; you do not know how dreadful!" she ended in a low tone.

"Poor child!" he said sympathetically, forgetting that she was not a child after all.

"You are never afraid, I suppose?" she asked with wistful wonder.

"Not in that way. It makes me more sorry for you. I wish I could help you."

"I suppose that no one can," she answered with another sigh. "I look at that water, that dreadful water, and I think what it must be to drown. I seem to feel the waves taking hold of me; and then I wish that I had never come away. I am not brave, like Kate."

She ended with a ring of distress in her voice, and Henry Dilworth looked at her and tried to understand her trouble; for he was touched by her childish confidence and appeal to him.

"I don't like to think that you mind it so much," he answered; "have you nothing you believe in that will make you not care, so that you could leave it all to happen as it should do and must, without being afraid beforehand?"

She looked at him wonderingly.

"I don't know. I suppose you mean—religion. I ought to have that. Susie always took care that we were taught properly. And she said we could be good without going to church so very much. I mean on week-days. Of course we always went on Sundays. But those things seem so far away—not real. We have to think of them, and we *see* these. This water is so near: even if I shut my eyes I hear it. And the wind feels so strong and is so loud and rough. Have you anything to think of that helps you?"

"I don't need help so much in that way. I have to be up and doing when things go wrong, as a rule, and there is a satisfaction in that. When there is nothing to be done I don't feel the use of being anxious. I like to watch and see how it's managed by the power that's got hold of it and won't let me touch it. There's a pleasure sometimes in feeling so small and seeing how big other things are. But then I have no one to be afraid for except myself—and what's the life of a man after all in a world like this?" he said, putting out his hand to indicate the tossing sea and the stormy sky which made all the visible universe.

"You are so strong every way," Agnes answered, looking at him with wonder, envy, and perhaps admiration. "I am not like that. I never can do anything when things go wrong. People have always taken care of me, and that makes me wonder if they can go on doing it, if they will be able, or if they will remember, when any real danger comes."

"You will feel so—naturally," he replied thoughtfully; "it isn't pleasant to have to rely on others; and then, in real danger, as you say, what can others do? You ought to have something to believe in better than just the help of your friends. A man feels the need of that sometimes, and what must a woman do? Did you ever hear of Sir Humphrey Gilbert?"

"I don't think so," said Agnes doubtfully.

"I was only thinking of something he said to encourage his men in danger: 'We are as near heaven by sea as by land.' Now if you could feel something like that," Henry Dilworth suggested doubtfully. But the doubt was in his own power of expressing the idea correctly, and not in the efficacy of the idea itself. His theological views were by no means orthodox, nor perhaps reasonable. It never entered into his head for a moment to think that Agnes might not be "fit for" heaven, that possibly the gates might be closed against her. A suggestion that he himself had a better chance of getting there would have been dismissed by him as out of the question. Her helplessness seemed to him a sufficient reason for an open door into the better land. He looked upon heaven as a haven for the weak rather than a reward for the righteous. He did not go so far as to make it into that mere refuge for the destitute and paradise for the incapable into which it is transformed in the minds of some persons; but he felt, without reasoning about it, that as all women, children, and helpless persons are put into the safest and most comfortable places in this world by the men who belong to them, naturally in the world to come they would have the preference also. If he had been told that after death he might be required to wait at the eternal gates, to see if room would be left for him after all the women and children had gone in, his sense of justice would hardly have revolted. For the heaven he had heard of was surely a place fitter for the residence of sweet women and innocent children than of such strong men as himself. It would be quite according to the fixed order of things that something should be found for him to do outside, as it always had been found for him in this world, while others took the comfortable places and seemed at home there. In the few sermons to which he had listened no mention had been made of that heaven conceived by Mrs. Browning as

being but a higher work to a surer issue; and his imagination had never busied itself in working out theological details for himself. He accepted therefore the theories generally propounded on the subject without much analyzing, and was content, on his own behalf, to wait for orders in death as in life. The next thing that evidently wanted doing constituted the order which he considered himself to have received. When there was nothing to be done he could be happy in idleness; and when things got beyond any doing of his, he had a way of standing in silence, mentally cap in hand, as if he watched the actions of a superior being whose ultimate designs were not confided to him. There was therefore nothing cynical in his belief that heaven was ready for Agnes at any moment when earth rejected her, and whatever life of frivolity she might have lead hitherto.

His effort to comfort her succeeded beyond his hopes.

"I remember that," she said, her face brightening, "it is Longfellow; only I had forgotten the man's name.

He sat upon the deck,
The book was in his hand;
"Do not fear! Heaven is as near,"
He said, "by water as by land!"

And she smiled with pleasure at this proof of her own knowledge of literature. "I shall try to think of it now when I am frightened. Do you feel like that—like Sir Humphrey Gilbert?"

"I haven't often felt afraid at sea. Things happen quickly there, and there is not so much time for thinking. Besides, there are many people about as a rule, and there's something to be done for them, or for yourself."

"And when have you felt afraid?" Agnes asked with interest.

"Well, I don't think it's ever been just like what you seem to feel. It hasn't been downright unpleasant, only strange. I felt it the most when I've been alone in some desert place, and perhaps walked till I thought I could walk no further, but must lie down and die.

"Oh, how dreadful!" breathed Agnes, as if for the first time realizing that his sufferings had been personal, and not part of an imaginative story.

"Other men have been in the same sort of thing, and had to go through with it, too, as I never had," he answered. "But when you're alone like that, and quite alone, altogether beyond helping yourself; when you know you must stay where you lie down, and none care to bury you; when there's not a creature near to bring you a morsel of food or a cup of water, and no one will, perhaps, ever know how you came to die, or where; that makes you begin to think, not exactly of heaven, but of God. The world's empty. You look up, thinking, perhaps, He sees; and you can give up your commission into His hand, as it might be. I've felt something like that at times."

"Ah, you are so different!" said Agnes, in a low, awestruck voice. "I like to think of heaven, but I am afraid of God."

"But heaven is, I suppose, only a little bit of God," suggested Henry Dilworth.

"I am afraid of the rest. I mean—I mean," she said, hesitating and flushing, "I don't want

to say anything wrong. But it seems so strong, doesn't it, and so cruel—the rest of it, all except heaven? They say even that Death is an angel. But how dreadful to have angels like that! Even Longfellow is dreadful sometimes, though he tries to make things sound pleasant. Do you know the next verse?—

In the first watch of the night,
Without a signal's sound,
Out of the sea mysteriously,
The fleet of Death rose all around."

She looked round her at the dark water as she spoke, and shivered with apprehension.

"That's only a poetical way of putting it," said her companion.

"Yes. It's pretty to read on shore, but not here, at sea. No, I don't like to think of Death or of God. But I will think about heaven as much as ever I can. Thank you for helping me. The others are not so kind—about this I mean. They don't understand."

For the first time she put out her hand to shake his, as she said good-bye, and some instinct of reverential compassion made him raise his hat.

"I shall say that verse over and over to myself when I am feeling frightened," she said.

And she went away comforted by her little formula against terror, as is the nun when she tells her beads, or the savage when he propitiates his hideous little idol. Her primitive longing for personal safety was wrapped about by mystic idealism, and she was as profoundly ignorant as the rest of her kind of the narrow selfishness of her little bit of religion.

(To be continued.)

ROSES.

IT was but yesterday my hands were heaped
With roses, blooming roses, red or white,
Sweet to the scent, most lovely to the sight:
I stood beside the river there at eve
When dew-drops fell, and birds did softly grieve,
When nature in her sweetest dreams was steeped.

I stood beside the river in a dream:
A vision: ah! a vision came to me,
I heard the sobbing of the plaining sea.
I watched my life, come wandering o'er the mead,
With outstretched hands: with feet that seemed
to bleed:
That seemed—ah me!—in truth all did but seem.

The purple hills enshrouded for the night,
In raiment pure, pale raiment of soft mist,
Just peeped to watch me: then as gently kissed
Upon the lips: I turned me to my life,
They vanished, and then rose fierce sounds of
strife,
And all was hid in mist-clouds dense and white.

Swiftly the morning drew with rosy hand
Night's heavy mystic curtain from the sky:
I saw my roses had begun to die.
And one by one, and lovely leaf by leaf,
They left me all alone, in mine own grief:
Then winter-tide walked soft across the land.

No more! I have no more. Alone I stray
Where flowers, precious flowers, were mine own;
Where once fair summer's radiance amply shone
All gone before; they float out to the sea,
The river bears them on unceasingly,
And I alone wait for another day.

Then all full swift I feel what I have lost:
The roses, dead dead roses, were the souls
That met and touched mine own: yet onward rolls
Life's river, bearing them away; and I
Look forward to that hour when silently
I'll follow them beyond life's cruel frost!

J. E. PANTON.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE

BY M. F. THEED.

CHAPTER II.

"ONE CAN'T UNDO ONE'S LIFE!"

SHALL I confess that I felt a certain jealous dislike of this young man—whom I had never seen, never heard of, up to that moment—take possession of me there and then, on the spot? I believe we have all acted the part of the dog in the manger, in our hearts at all events, at one time or another in our lives.

He was not, as far as I was able to judge in that dim light, much to look at, and there was no great difference between his height and that of Phillis herself, as she stood beside him; but his accent and manner were an improvement upon her father's, and indeed upon the accent and manner of men of their grade generally. He offered us his company back to the farm, but this Phillis refused with a laugh and a toss of the head.

"No, no; you had better go home, George. Mr. Francis and I can find our way perfectly well without you, and I should not wonder if we were to meet with as warm a welcome as if we took you."

"A trifle warmer, I'll engage," he returned good-humouredly, "or you would fare but badly. I'm not to have one to-night I suppose, Phil?" he added under his voice, but loud enough for me to hear. "Well, good-night, and God bless you!"

He wrung her hand so that she drew it from him with a little cry, half of pain, half of petulance, raised his cap as he wished me good-night, and walked briskly off in one direction as we started in the other.

"Well, Phillis," I said—I had always called her by her Christian name since I first knew her home from her holidays—"That is what we call a case, I suppose, is it not?"

"What is 'a case'?" she asked innocently, lifting her blue eyes to mine, as she leant lightly on my arm. "If you mean?"

"That is just it," I replied, "I *do* mean!"

She laughed a little nervously and her eyes dropped.

"Well, Mr. Francis, it is and it is not, if you can understand that. It is between him and me, it is not between father and him. You see father is very exacting. He expects so much—more than he will ever get—I don't mean for himself, for *me*. He forgets, you know, everybody does

not see with his eyes, and there is nobody coming here, not that I want anybody—not anybody else—I am quite, quite content! But he thinks—oh! I don't know what he thinks! That George is not settled enough or steady enough, and does not work hard enough. And that I am too young—that I don't know my own mind. But I do, and my mind is to marry George, and I shall."

She uttered these words so loud and with such a will in them, that they had scarcely passed her lips before she herself burst out laughing at the tone she had taken.

"But I mean it, you know," she said. "I do mean it, and it is better always to say what you mean; isn't it?"

I told her, of course, that I would never tell any one to say what they did not mean, but that there were times, as my longer experience of life had taught me, when it was wiser and better to say nothing, and that I thought such a time had come to her. It was no use her opposing herself to her father—her will to his will—and he was right upon one score, at all events: she was very young, and this lover of hers was young, too. They had plenty of time before them—he to work and she to wait; and doubtless, if he had patience to work for her, and she to wait for him, and her father saw it, the day would come when he would relent, and everything would come right, without rebellion on her part or resentment on his.

She did not know, she said. She had heard of people and read of people wasting the best years of their lives waiting. She was young and strong, and she did not care about money! His mother would help them; they could make their way, if not in England, then abroad. Not that she wished to offend her father, if he would be reasonable; but what was she to do? He could not expect her to go on for ever leading the life she led now. It had been better in the summer when she could get out and walk into town, and see the people, at all events, if she could not talk to them. But now! Yes, it was true that she helped her mother and did her bit of fancy work, and the day went; but was she to let all her life go like that? Because they knew nobody, and cared to know nobody, was she never to see any one or go anywhere? Did not I see that it was very hard, and could I blame her that she saw it and was tired of it, and wanted to get away from it?

I could not say that I did. I could do nothing but counsel her to be patient and bear in mind that, dull as her present life was, there were worse things than dulness to be encountered in the world outside; and that *minus* the money she had spoken of so disdainfully, her position would, to say the least of it, not be bettered by marrying. If it was amusement she wanted, how was she to get it by that? If it was society—

"Don't say any more," she exclaimed, interrupting me, "for I see you don't understand. What should I want with society, when I had *him*?"

There was not much chance of my misunderstanding her, I thought, and I don't know which I felt sorriest for—parents or child. They, with the best love of their hearts going for so little; she, so ready to sacrifice the substance for what *might* only be the shadow, and forsake the tried for the untried, to stake her all upon the one die! I did not attempt to discuss it with her—what was the good? But I made out the most I could

about the young man, his position and prospects, and found that for the last six months he had been managing the farm adjoining Merritt's for his mother; but that he was eager to better himself, and that his idea was to set up on his own account with the bit of money his father had left him. It would not be enough, Phillis added candidly; but it would go a good way, and the parents on both sides could easily make it up between them, and start them fair. Mrs. Laurence had said she would do her part, but Merritt still held out, and said that Phillis was too young; that a man with his way to make in the world should take time to see how he did and could make it, before he asked any woman to face it with him—and—well, I suppose, everything that could be said upon his side of the question.

The farmer himself met us at the gate, and I fancied he gave a suspicious sort of look at his daughter, as he welcomed and ushered me in. It would have been easy to see from his manner and from the girl's, that there was some screw loose between them, even had I not heard as much. They both tried to be pleasant, but rather to me than to each other; and the light on Phillis's face, which had seemed to be inseparable from it in the days when I first knew her, came and went now as fitfully as sunshine in stormy weather. In her mother there was no such perceptible change. Sad, and silent, and subdued as I had always seen her, so she was still. It was only when she found herself alone with me for a minute, whilst Merritt went to take his last look round for the night (Phillis also being out of sight and sound), she dropped for a moment the mask she habitually wore, and turned upon me the most anxious eyes in the world.

"Tell me," she almost gasped in the hurry and excitement of her fear lest they should come back before she had time to ask or I to answer; "do tell me. Did she speak to you? Did she tell you? She is fond of you, I know, and I thought she would; but, oh! was she very wilful? Did she talk as if she would brave *him*? She does not know him as I do, and I can't tell her, and she would not listen if I could! But you were always kind. And do *you* speak to her—do *you* warn her, to do anything—to bear with anything—sooner than go against his will!"

It was not so much what she said as the way in which she spoke, which scared me as I heard her with a sudden horror of the dimensions this nervousness of hers might one day attain to. Already she seemed to be half distraught with fear. Why did not she—I could not help asking her—appeal to her daughter's affection as well as to her sense of duty? Conjure her by the love she owed them not to be in so great a hurry to leave them?

"For your sake," I said. "If you were to put it to her like that—"

She broke into the dreariest, most discordant little laugh I ever heard.

"For my sake!" she repeated bitterly. "She loves him more than she loves me; she'd do more for him than she'd do for me. And she is so young, you know, and hard in some ways. She can't make allowance—the young never can. She blames me—I know she does—in her heart—once she said it—that the house is not happier; and what am I to do—what am I to do? One can't undo one's life. God knows I would if I could!"

But is she to go and spoil hers, and nobody to stop her? And if I were to tell her the truth——"

She paused then as suddenly as though she had been shot. Words had escaped her in her excitement she had never intended to utter. What was it, I wondered, she was keeping from the girl, which the girl ought to know?

"Well," I said deliberately, "why don't you tell her the truth?"

"Because I cannot," she murmured piteously, turning her face from me. "I dare not. I could sooner tell you than her. But for God's sake (as we heard Merritt's footsteps in the passage) warn her! Say what you like—anything you like—only warn her!"

It was not such an easy thing to get speech of Phillis again by herself before I went, but next morning I hung about and watched my opportunity until I did. I can see her now as I saw her then—the tall, lissom figure, the shapely head, with its thick coils of light brown hair, and its dauntless—almost defiant—carriage; the handsome, resolute face, which seemed so out of character with all its surroundings.

"Phillis," I said, "before I go, I have something to say to you. Don't let me find, when I come next year, you have done anything rash—anything you will repent of. I don't say to you give him up. If he cares for you, you need not do that; but I do say wait. You have time before you, and you would not be a happy woman if you began life, as you would be beginning it, if you ran counter to your father's wishes, with a breach of duty, and gratitude, and affection. You should remember, child, who are your best friends. You owe them everything, and what have you got to give them but the pleasure of your company for a time? They can't keep you for ever—that nobody expects or thinks of. But, Phillis, if you are wise—if you are as thoughtful of others as I believe you to be—you will let this lover of yours put his hand to the plough, and show your father what stuff he is made of, before matters go any further between you two."

It was very kind advice, she said, and she thanked me for giving it; but I did not know her father. If once he made up his mind to a thing, there was no appeal; and he had made up his mind against George Laurence, and against her marrying him. She might wait, and persuade him to wait—she did not say she would not—but it would come to the same thing in the long run. He would never give his consent, and she should have to run the risk of his never forgiving her. She did not wish to be undutiful or ungrateful, but——

The long and the short of it was, she was in love, and not to be reasoned with in any way.

"You must do as you like," I said at last; "but bear in mind one thing. Your father may or may not forgive you, but your mother will break her heart."

"My mother—about me? Shall I tell you something you don't know? Father cares more about this little finger of mine than she does for my whole body. No, no, Mr. Francis; if I break anybody's heart at all by my going, it will not be mother's; but I shall not break any—no fear. There is one I might break by staying," she added softly, with a little fond laugh.

I could do nothing with it. I could not even get her to promise to take me into her confi-

dence before she took any decisive step in the matter.

"It might be worth your while," I urged. "I might have it in my power to help you. Your father likes me, I believe, after his fashion."

"That is just it," she said quickly. "And he shall never like you less, if I can help it, for coming between him and me. No, I won't promise. I might not be able to keep my word, and, please God, I hope never to break it."

I knew, of course, where she had given her word, and that there, most assuredly, she meant never to break it; and I wished her good-by sadly enough, for when two wills such as hers and her father's come into collision, there can scarcely fail to be disaster.

(To be continued.)

SOME OLD PRESCRIPTIONS.

IN a former paper the writer had occasion to discourse on the "Physic of our Forefathers," and to illustrate his remarks by frequent reference to the *Ayescough MSS.*, which are now preserved in the British Museum. In the present article he purposes to pursue the same subject, his chief authority being a curious little volume printed in black letter and entitled, *A Rich Storehouse, or Treasure for the Diseased, wherein are many approved Medicines for divers and sundrie Diseases, which have beene long hidden, and not come to light before this Time.* The *Treasure* contains about eight hundred prescriptions, and was published upwards of two centuries ago. The first prescription, chosen at random, will be "A new method to Cure the Ague." It is a simple remedy, the virtue of which may be readily tested, and possesses a recommendation not often to be found in the physic of our forefathers—namely, that of being entirely free from objection. Take a "goodde quantitie of small daisies and boyle them in a little faire running water, and straine them, and let the patient drinke the juyce thereof." To cure a cold, "blowe poudere of primroses into the nose through a quille." For sore eyes, "take rotten apples and distill them in a common stillatory, and with the water thereof wash the eyes often, and it will both cleanse and clear the sight." Things good for the heart are "saffron, cloves, muske, mirthe, and gladnesse." Things "ill for the heart" are "beans, pease, sadnesse, anger, onions, evil-tidings, losse of friends, gluttonie, and wante." Amongst other prescriptions "to open the pipes of the heart, being stopped," and to "comfort the heart that is weak," may be found one that is still frequently in request for the former purpose, especially at charity dinners. It is to drink "a pint of sacke," or, if preferred, a pint of "malmsie." In the present day the liquor would doubtless be champagne. Amongst other things prescribed as "good for the braines," are "sage, camomill, muske, sacke, or malmsie," [the last two to be "drunken measurably,] to sleep measurably, and to hear but little noyse of musicke or singers." Things bad for the braines are to sleep much after eating, "gluttonie," too much wine, "corrupt ayres," cold, anger, "heaviness of the mynde,"

to stand much bare-head, to partake of "over-much milke," garlick, and onions, and to smell a white rose. The "marrowe of swyne's feet" is said to be a good cosmetic for the hair, if applied with the juice of a lemon, cow's milk, and rose-water. A salve of similar composition is warranted "to take away the pimples and high colour out of one's face, and be it never so farre spent and gone, to make one's face faire, cleane, and to shine;" and, "be he never so pale-faced and wanne," to make one "looke with a faire and good colour." Gout may be cured by an oil extracted from moles, "which have been potted and buried for a month by the almanacke;" whilst an "excellent goode oyntment" for the "gowt" is prepared thus:—"Take a fatte goose and plucke her and dress her as if she should be eaten; stuffe the belly of her with three or four younge cats, well chopped into smaile peces, with a handful of baye salt; put twenty snales in alsoe, and then sewe up her belly again, and roste her atte a smaile fire, and save all the drippinge of her, and keepe it for a precieuse oyntment." A wine made of flint-stones is recommended as a good drink for persons of a gouty diathesis. A very valuable prescription for staunching "bloode," "*when nothing will stop it*," is to take a toad and dry it in the sun; then put it into a linen bag, and hang the same about the neck of the sufferer, so that he may touch the breast on the left side near the heart. This is warranted to "staye all manner of blood at the mouth, nose, wounde, or otherwise whatsoever." Much value has always been placed by our forefathers on the curative powers of gold, prepared either medicinally or otherwise. A drink which, if not as good as gold, at any rate having gold entering into its composition, is here recommended as the best preservative against infection. It might be prepared in this manner:—"Take a pece of fine gold" (presumably fifteen carat) "and put into it the juyce of lemmons for the space of foure-and-twentie houres, and put to it a little powder of "angelica-roots" (celery), "mingled with white wine, and let the patient drinke a goode draught thereof." "This," says the learned author, "is a most precieuse drinke, and it is muche to be wondered at what help and remedie some that used this drinke have had thereby, although it hath been supposed by many learned physicians that sick persons were past all hope of remedie; yet, by God's providence, they have recovered againe." The above medicine was vouched for as being a perfect protection against any infection, even that of the plague; but, the latter disease being acquired, to combat so dread a complaint required a "most experienced physic." "Take a cocke, a chicken, or a pullet and pull off all the feathers cleane atte the taile, so that the rumpe may be bare, and then hold the bare place to the sore, and immediately you shall see the cocke, chicken, or pullet, gape and labour for life, and in the end it will dye; then take another cocke, chicken, or pullet againe, and doe the like, and if the same dye, then take another, and soe doe as aforesaide, and let the party grieved be applied therewith as aforesaide so long as any of them doe dye." This will infallibly cure the "greate sickness." The last-mentioned cure is in its description even worse than the complaint, but the deeper one dives into

this *Treasure for the Diseased*, the more "on horrors' heads horrors accumulate;" so, with one more quotation from the *Storehouse*, this paper may be as well concluded. "It is saide many men have been cured of the falling evil (epilepsy or falling sickness) by drinking of the powder of dead men's skulles burnt. The skulle of a dead man whereon moss groweth being taken and washed very cleane, and dried in an oven, and then beaten to powder, will cure this infirmite, although the parties grieved have been tronbled therewith many years before. But this skulle must be the skulle of one that hath been slaine, or of one that was hanged, or that came to a sudden death, and not the skulle of one that dyed of any sickness, or else by other maladies growing of long continuance in the head." The great physician, Sir Astley Cooper, once, it is reported, declared that the science of medicine was founded upon conjecture, and improved by murder. With what equal truth, indeed, may it be said to have been reared upon the ruins of ignorance and superstition?

J. G.

IN MEMORIAM: GORDON.

BY COULSON KERNAHAN.

"K HARTOUM has fallen!" When the tidings came
Men stared and staggered; then with bated breath:
"And what of Gordon—is it life or death?"
But answer was there none. With heaving frame,
England arose to gaze, with eyes aflame,
To where he lay in the drear desert wild—
Her soldier-saint—her lion-hearted child,
But all was silent. Worn with watching, lame,
And eyes tear-blinded, as she knelt to claim
The help of God—his God and hers—one morn
Came fearful tidings, sweeping, lightning-borne,
Around the world that echoed with his fame;
And women wept—yea, stern eyes gleamed and filled,
As the wild cry arose—"The gallant Gordon's killed!"

Then burst from British eyes the blinding tear,
A world was weeping for a Hero dead;
A Soldier-Saint, a King of men, he bled
For God, for Truth—for all that men revere—
And died for England, who, in woe sincere,
Now mourns him fallen. Yet in that bright land
Whereto he mounteth shining cohorts stand
To crown him Victor, hail with clarion clear:
And so we leave him. While on earth appear
Such men as Gordon, faith and love, and hope,
Shall guide us onward, urge us up the slope
That leads to Heaven; and England need not fear
That honour, courage, truth, shall fail or flee,
While England boasts such gallant sons as he!

MY BACHELORHOOD, AND WHAT
BECAME OF IT.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., B.N.

CHAPTER I.

WRITTEN A MONTH BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

I'M not a bachelor. That is, I'm not a bachelor in the strict sense of the word, because I am married, and have a wee toddling family. But so far as doing for myself to some considerable extent is concerned, I have been a bachelor for more than a month. And now I will tell you how it happened.

A terrible hullabaloo got up at the top of the stair one day last autumn—the stair is close to my study. Ida had ran away with one of Harold's toys, Harold had followed, and inflicted summary justice on her, using a wooden doll on her head, precisely as a Comanche Indian uses a war-club. And Inez had rushed to the rescue, and it ended by the whole three tumbling downstairs in a heap.

"Pon my word," I roared, "it is enough to try the temper of a saint. Sarah! Jane! anybody! *can't* you keep those children quiet?"

Well, it *was* provoking; I'm an author by profession, that is, I make my bread and the bairnies' bread by brain and pen. I had just sat down to write; I was concentrating. I was about to describe a scene that needed a little fine writing and no little pathos, and had just succeeded, by the aid of my violin and guitar, in working myself into a delightfully sensitive mood, when the terrible scrimmage got up at the stair top. *Was* it not provoking, and the printer waiting for copy?

Even my wife admitted that it was provoking, when I mentioned the matter during luncheon.

"But," she added, with one of her most wifely smiles, "you were once a child yourself, Willie."

"I'm not quite prepared to deny it," I replied. "I might have been a child myself once. A child mind you, that is *one* child, but, bother my whiskers, I wasn't three or four, was I? It is the plurality of the affliction I object to. Even an author might stand one pair of legs running overhead, one pair of lungs shouting over the banisters, but when it comes to three or four pairs of each, and their owners all bounding downstairs in a heap, a chaotic mixture of bare legs, bare arms, and distorted faces, with music to match, then—pass the patatoes, please."

"Heigho!" I sighed; "I sometimes do long for a little peace. I'm all behind with my printers; three editors are writing every day for copy, and one wretch has actually taken to telegraph for it. He wants to prove the gravity of the situation by working the wires and spending shillings without end. I'd give all the world for—another chop please, thanks."

"Do you know," I continued, "I'd like to own an island in the vasty deep, or a lodge in a wilderness, or a lonely cave by the sounding sea, of a lighthouse. I would like to take the wings of the morning and fly unto—pudding? Yes, or course."

"I don't think," said my better half, "that the seriousness of your situation affects your appetite."

"Ah, dear!" I answered, "you're joking again. I tell you it is no joking matter. And there are those verses I promised to——"

Rat tat.

"What is it Sarah? A telegram? Humph. Now, read this, dear. Listen to this melting lay."

"Do pray send on next chapter. We are quite at a standstill."

"Why, my dear, an appeal like that is enough to draw tears from a rocking horse, it is indeed. It is—cheese? Yes Sarah, a bit of Gorgonzola, and I say, Sarah is there any of that celery left?"

"And it isn't only the children, my dear, but all day long the hall bell goes ring-ding-ring, and the kitchen knocker rat-tat-tat. If it isn't the baker, it's the butcher, or the grocer, or fishmonger, or a man with a box, or a man with a bill. Why don't you tell them to only give one knock? Why don't you explain to them that they needn't shout as if the basement were on fire, and there were people asleep in the attics. Why don't you—but there, you're going to cry—so like a woman. Sarah, bring my pipe!"

Old Boosey a neighbour of mine often pops into my study of a forenoon, and I have sometimes wished he wouldn't. He comes in free-and-easy-like by the French window, throws himself into my rocking chair, reaches up his hand and helps himself to my tobacco pouch and lights up.

"Go on," he says, "go on, write away. Don't let me interfere with your work, I love industry."

But it does interfere with my work. I don't want a man sitting smoking at my back when I'm writing, especially if I am not smoking myself.

The morning after the battle of the bairns at the stair top, old Boosey dropped in as usual.

"No news, I suppose," I said, by way of saying something.

"Well, no," he replied, "nothing of importance. By-the-by though, Miss Mittson is leaving that cottage on the hill that you fancied last year."

"Is she?" I said, becoming suddenly interested.

"Shutting it up," he went on, "going away for the winter months; afraid to stay there after the recent burglaries."

"By St. Thomas!" I cried starting up "the place would suit me all to pieces. I'm glad you looked in for once in a way, Boosey. I'll go and see the old girl without a moment's delay."

So I did. I took the foot-path across the field, and in less than half-an-hour I was closeted with Miss Mittson.

Yes she would be pleased to let me have the cottage, furnished as it was, for the winter months. Glad indeed to get a tenant who would keep a fire in it.

"I suppose," she added, "you won't be afraid of burglars, but it is *so* gloomy here after nightfall."

"Bother the burglars, no," I replied, delighted at my success, and hopes of prospective peace. "There is one thing to be said in favour of burglars, Miss Mittson, they are quiet. They don't ring the bell, they don't knock at the door loud enough to wake the dead, and they don't come tumbling down stairs all of a heap when you are concentrating. So I'm your tenant, Miss Mittson, and very glad to be."

The lady went away in a week, and I took possession at once. My servant lad was engaged for a whole forenoon passing to an fro 'twixt my

new study and my old, with barrow-loads of books, my violin and guitar cases, and last of all the cockatoo, for Cockie was to be my only companion at the cottage.

There is at least one thing in this world that neither Baron Rothschild nor Vanderbilt is rich enough to buy, and that is my cockatoo. I have sometimes thought she is the only being in the world who thoroughly understands me. When I talk to her she is attentive, and the remarks she makes in reply are neat and to the point. When I play slow airs on my old Cremona, Cockie looks as solemn as a clerk at a vestry meeting; if I hit off a hornpipe, Newcastle fashion, Cockie is all alive in a moment.

"Go it," she cries, "Jack's alive. Keep it up. Keep it up. Keep it up."

And at last she fairly dances and sings with delight.

For Cockie is no ordinary cockatoo.

CHAPTER II.

WRITTEN A MONTH AFTER CHRISTMAS.

COCKIE and I are fairly settled down now in single blessedness at the Poplars. N.B.—It is called the Poplars—this cottage of Cockie's and mine—for the simple reason that there isn't a poplar tree within a quarter of a mile of it. I note that most cottages in the country are named according to the rule of contrariety and not according to Cocker.

But this is a charmingly quiet retired little box. I think that even Cockie feels that the change has done her good, for she chatters and dances constantly. She has my company all day, and she has warmth all night, for the last thing I do before going home is to bank fires, to keep her comfortable till morning, and her master return to cheer her.

Yes, nothing could beat the repose and quiet that dwells for ever around this bonnie wee cottage. It is a long distance from any house, and not far from a lovely pine wood. To-night, as I sit here, pen in hand, I can hear the south wind moaning through the trees, with a sighing sound that some might call dreary, but it minds me of being on the ocean, and I love it.

It must have been a hermit who built this cot, for there is not even a road to it, only a tiny footpath, so no one ever passes the window, and the noise of wheels never falls on my ear, nor shouts of itinerant vendors of wares. Even tramps never come near it, perhaps they are too lazy, or probably they deem it deserted. Old Boosey called once; but Boosey is very fat and large, and doesn't like a footpath. Besides, I wouldn't let him smoke owing to Miss Mittson's curtains. So, on the whole, I don't think Boosey will come back.

There is a nice garden surrounding my cottage, a rose lawn in front of the French window of the room were I write, while beyond that, is a somewhat melancholy looking meadow, with a somewhat melancholy looking horse in it. I do not know the exact age of that horse, but he appears to me to be at least a hundred years old. It also appears to me that he was left there and forgotten

by some one long long ago, and that he will never be come for, and that he knows it. He stands leaning over my railing and looking at the cabbages, sometimes for an hour at a time, and the prevailing expression of his countenance is sorrow, blended with pensive meditation. I frequently give him a cabbage, and he sighs his gratitude.

There is a hare that often comes out of the wood and sits down in the meadow to wash its face; there is a cock-robin who sings to us on the gate, and cheekie sparrows who come to pick up the seeds that have been thrown out of Cockie's cage-drawer, and a bonnie brown weasel that comes every fine forenoon, and standing on its hind legs close to the window, stares in at us.

I leave home at eight in the morning, riding as far as I can ride on my 'cycle, trundle the machine up through the meadow, enter my cottage, and am duly saluted by Cockie with as much joy and excitement, as if I had newly returned from a six months' cruise. Then I light my fire, wash my hands and settle down to work. At twelve o'clock, Cockie and I have cocoatina; I go home to lunch at one, back at two; Cockie and I have tea at five. Of course, we make our own tea and cocou, that is the beauty of being a bachelor. We don't want servants pottering around us, it is a glorious thing—the adjective "glorious" is not a whit too strong—to be independent.

When I finally close the shutters and depart, Cockie says "*Poor Polly!*" with most melting emphasis on the "*poor.*"

The human being who formerly occupied the cottage, and who probably built it, might have been a hermit, but there is certainly nothing of the hermitary about it now, inside at all events, for our Miss Mittson's furniture and fittings, from ceiling to floor, from curtains to carpet, from the brackets with their vases to the fender with its fire irons, all are in the best of taste. And if you judged of Miss Mittson herself from her room, you would not be far wrong.

The kitchen is a sight in itself. There are so many knick-knacks that I do not know the names of, and which I will not attempt to describe. Perhaps if I did the reader would say it was only a very ordinary kitchen after all. Perhaps the reader would be right, but men, and especially sailor men, are not much used to kitchens; hence everything to me is fresh. For instance, that wonderful little brass lamp, into which you pour a little paraffin and can't see anything of the paraffin after you have poured it in. But it burns all the same, with a feeble smoky flame, and you surround it with a glass, which looks like a tumbler minus a bottom; this is no doubt for fear of a spark. Then in the kitchen there are mysterious looking pepper-boxes, and mysterious coffee-pots, and kettles, and brushes, and pans, and a mysterious boot-jack, that goes by clock-work after you wind it up—no, it is a *roasting-jack*, or a spit, or something; never mind, there it is, and you can't alter it. But everything in the kitchen is so clean; the dresser is as white as a ship's quarterdeck, the sink itself like marble, the hearth-stone like snow, and the flat-topped fender is surely made of polished silver.

And if you judged of Miss Mittson herself by her kitchen, you would not be far wrong.

Now I'll tell you, ladies, what I can do—and I

timed myself doing it—I can lay my fire and light it, and trim my paraffin lamp, all within four and a half minutes; from which I infer that I am rather a clever fellow. It isn't everybody who can clean the glass of a paraffin lamp. You do it when it is cold, and you can use the kitchen poker to shove the rag in, or you can use a carving fork, but it is as well to wash the fork before using it for anything else.

Before Miss Mittson went away, she gave verbal expression to a few of her hopes. They were as follows—to *wit*: she hoped I would always keep the garden gate shut, because the old horse had got in once and crunched the flowers, ate the greens, and rolled in the strawberry bed; she hoped I would always lock the door when I left at night; she hoped I wouldn't spill the red ink on the druggist—what is a druggist I wonder?—and finally, she hoped I wouldn't knock over the lamp and fire the house. I hope I won't either, but if I do, I'll jump out at the French window with Cockie's cage, first thing.

On the whole, I have got on wonderfully well as a bachelor, and I have picked up a few wrinkles about household management that are worth remembering.

Fire lighting was a bother at first. I *once* used a round barrel-like morsel of pumice-stone, which I got through an advertisement. You are supposed to dip it in paraffin and it will go on lighting fires for a hundred years without soiling the fingers. I used it once just, and I daresay it went up the chimney—anyhow I saw no more of it. The fire-lighters I now use are cakes, apparently composed of saw-dust, pitch, and the parings of strengthening plasters. But they do their duty.

I found a funny little brush in Miss Mittson's kitchen, with a handle to it, flat, like a canoe-paddle, with hair on one side. I've seen our Sarah touch up the bars of the grate with just such another brush, and it left them *so* tidy. I tried that trick, but I burned half the hair out of the brush and made Cockie cough. There is some skill required in using it I suppose.

The ash-pan. I know it is called the ash-pan. It stands under the grate and keeps things tidy. It is a first-rate arrangement and holds a lot. It wants emptying though, about once a week. I went out through the French window with it the first time. Boreas was blowing. Boreas caught the contents of the ash-pan before I could wriggle out. I was nearly choked. The Sahara was nothing to it. This *contretemps* did not improve my appearance, nor my temper—nor the carpet. Next time I took more care. I went out through the back door, threw the business upside down on the dustheap, and ran off till the storm blew over. Oh! yes, it is a capital thing an ash-pan, and if you capsize it deftly you feel happy, then, if in merry mood, you can use it as a tambourine while you march indoors again.

There is a shovel that looks like a sieve in Miss Mittson's kitchen. I knew what that was as soon as I saw it. It was for sifting and saving the cinders. There is nothing like economy in household matters. "Why," I said to myself, "shouldn't I sift and save the cinders?" I took the sieve-like shovel into the drawing-room and at once commenced operations in the ash-pan. But I didn't save many cinders, and I don't think the dust improved the furniture, for the keys of the piano afterwards

made my fingers quite black; and before I could see my face in the looking-glass I had to clear a hole. I suppose there is an art even in cinder sifting.

When a fire is kept up all day in a drawing-room I find it is necessary sometimes to tidy up the fireside. This is another operation that requires some skill, not to say tact. However, with a good ash-pan the labour is considerably lessened, because you can brush dust and ashes in under for a whole week, and no one is any the wiser. The inventor of the ash-pan ought to have a wooden monument. The hearthrug wants seeing to, say once a fortnight. The easiest way to see to it, I find, is to roll it up like a school-map, escape with it through the French window, and beat it against the iron railing.

The blinds in my drawing-room window annoyed me considerably at first. They are those patent businesses that move on spring rollers, and you never can be sure of them. They have a mind of their own. Probably, when you have drawn them down for the night and all is quiet and still—click—up goes the centre one to the very top, and if it be dark you can't help fancying there is a face out on the lawn staring in at you. I have rolled mine up and stowed them away under the sofa, where Miss Mittson will find them on her return.

Did bachelors who have done for themselves, ever notice a disagreeable trick that some pairs of tongs have of plaiting their legs and feet, and refusing to move them either way at the moment they are most wanted. It is caused by luxation of their pelvic joints. Miss Mittson's drawing-room tongs often go like that, especially when a morsel of live coal jumps out of the fire and alights on the beautiful hearthrug—which it does not improve.

Talking about the tongs puts me in mind of the poker. I lost mine for ten whole days. What a funny thing to lose! I'm a little absent-minded when thinking, so there was no saying where it might or mightn't turn up; I looked for it in the parlour and in the passage, all over the kitchen, and among the coals in the cellar. No, it wasn't anywhere there. I might have put it behind the drawing-room looking-glass, but I hadn't; it might have fallen down behind the piano, but it hadn't. Nor it wasn't at the back of the chiffonier, nor under the sofa, nor in any of the drawers. Neither had I abstractedly taken it out of doors to stake chrysanthemums. Finally I gave it up; it was lost, like Lucy Gray, so I had to use a toe of the tongs to poke the fire. But, lo and behold! when it became necessary one day to "make a clean fireside," I found the poker right enough and snug enough in under the bulwarks of the fender.

One day, in another moment of forgetfulness, I forgot my latch-key, that is, I left it inside, and, slamming the door, locked myself out. This necessitated me climbing up by a spout over the water-butt, crawling along the roof of the scullery, and getting in through the gable window. As I did so I noticed a tall tramp-looking man in the wood leaning against a tree and watching me. I noticed that he had a most villainous-looking face, and that at his feet lay one of those straw bags that workmen carry their tools in.

"Poor fellow," I said to myself, "he is gathering acorns and fir-cones, no doubt, to make rustic picture-frames of.

But the poor fellow was doing nothing of the kind.

CHAPTER III.

WRITTEN IN BED.

I'm not at the Poplars now. My bachelorhood is ended. I am at home in my own house, and in bed. I have been ill—very ill. But I am convalescent at last, though my head is still banded and painful at times. Cockie is in his cage yonder in a corner of the room, perched on one leg in a meditative mood; on the hearth-rug lies an immense dog of the boar-hound or Great Dane breed. He is watching me with one eye, but seems asleep with the other.

My window is wide open and the soft spring air steals in and refreshes me, bringing with it the odour of flowers and the song of birds, and hope and health, and happiness—that strange dreamy contented feeling, which only those who have been really ill and are coming back again to newness of life ever enjoy.

I do not long for loneliness now as I used to, even the voices of the children at play are music to me, and I'm rather delighted than otherwise, when Boosey comes in and sits down and reads the paper to me or talks.

The Goat-and-Bells is a rustic little beer-house on the outskirts of our village. Its great kitchen does duty for parlour and tap-room as well. It has one long wooden table, and one long wooden dais; on winter evenings, a roaring fire burns in the grate and glimpses of the cheerful blaze may be caught through the half open door by people passing to and fro in the darkness. These and the sight of the landlord himself, seated quietly smoking in his high but hard-backed arm-chair, with a mug of ale on the mantel-piece, lure many a one inside who has two-pence to spend.

One evening there entered and seated himself on the dais, near the fire, a tall and by no means a handsome tramp. He threw down his basket between his feet, and iron tools could be heard rattling therein. The landlord bustled away to get the beer, and the funnel-shaped apparatus to heat it in, while the tramp bent over the blaze, and extended his fingers to warm them.

"On the road, measter?" said the landlord re-seating himself, and taking up his pipe.

"Yes," replied the tramp eyeing him furtively, "I'm a looking for work. Hard times these for poor tradesmen."

"So they be," assented the landlord "so they be, you're; a tailor, aren't you? Ah! I thought so from the looks o' them long fingers o' yourn."

"Have a drop with me," said the tramp after a pause.

"Thank 'ee," the landlord said, and he then waxed more cheerful and communicative.

"Much work about this village?" the tramp inquired.

"Not a very much," was the answer, "not a very much. Bless ye, the good folks all go away afore winter comes on."

"Ah! do they? Shnt their houses up, I dare say?"

"No, not much either. Leaves some old woman

in them. But they takes away their walliables, they does. He! he!"

"Humph!" grunted the tramp. "Pretty little cottage that is, now, up at the woodside. Any chance of a bit of gardening to be got there. Eh?"

"Bless ye, no. Bless ye, no. Only one gentleman there."

"Only one, eh? Well I passed down that way to-night. Heard people talking inside. Keeps company I suppose?"

"Not he. Ha! ha! only his old cockatoo. He bees an author kind o' chap. Writes books and such."

"Rich?"

"Wonderful! All authors, they tell me, are. Make money as fast as wink they does, and hardly knows o' the getting o' it. It's lucky bein' born wi' brains."

"That's so," said the tramp, who forthwith took to studying the fire again.

Dogs know a deal more than we give them credit for. Most people who understand these animals will admit this; but I have sometimes been half inclined to believe they—or some of them at least—are gifted with a kind of second sight. When I left home that day for my bachelor chambers in the lonely cottage, Kaiser, my splendid Dane, was standing at the gate, and I could not help pausing to admire his beautiful proportions. All the grace and symmetry of a greyhound has Kaiser; all the strength and muscle of a mastiff.

But Kaiser was not there to be admired. He gave me distinctly to understand that he meant to accompany me to the cottage.

"No, Kaiser, no," I reasoned, "it cannot be. Much though I and Cockie would appreciate your company we may not have it. Miss Mittson's carpet must be treated with courtesy. Your feet are large, and the path is muddy; Kaiser, you cannot come."

Kaiser's face fell, his ears dropped, and his steel-grey eyes were filled with sorrow. But he did not attempt to disobey, only, when I looked back before turning the distant corner, the dog still stood at the gate gazing after me. He was thinking I might probably relent and whistle; but I did not. What pain and suffering my doing so would have saved me!

The day was an unusually dark one, and wore early to a close. Then drops of rain began to patter against the big panes in the French window of the little cottage, and I could see the giant pine trees nodding their black heads in the rising breeze.

I like to muse and think a little in the quiet twilight—twixt the gloaming and the mirk—especially if I have anything pleasant to think about. But the moaning of the wind through the chinks of the casement induced in my mind a kind of melancholy to-night, which, strange as it may seem to some, I rather fostered than attempted to banish. The fact is, I was about to write a chapter of a sea tale, in which some pathos was needed, and one must feel to write well.

So I sat in my easy-chair, without lighting my lamp until it was almost quite dark.

Presently I started; I felt almost sure a form passed the window, that a white face had looked in at me. "Fancy, fancy, all fancy," I said half aloud. I picked up a morsel of guitar string and

threw it on the fire. It looked like a tiny snake wriggling and leaping among the coals. I took up the guitar itself and let my fingers wander listlessly over the strings, touching them so softly that they seemed to sigh out the plaintive old-world Scotch airs I played,

Soon after my head was bent over my paper; I was in the mood, and busy, busy writing. But more than once that evening as I looked towards the window, the panes of which looked black with the darkness without, I thought I saw that white face again. I felt then sufficiently nervous to wish that I had not stowed away the whole of Miss Mittson's window-blinds, bad and all though they were.

I went on writing, never heeding the time, until I had finished my chapter.

It was long past nine, and my wife would be getting anxious.

Presently, however, the moon would rise, and I would have light to go home.

I still had to look for a verse as a heading for my chapter, and so spent minutes rummaging among my poets. None would suggest anything, then I went to Miss Mittson's music stand and pulled forth some old songs. Ha! here it was, the very thing, and I must sit down before the piano and sing it. A bonnie old poem by Tom Moore,

Ask of the sailor youth, when far
His light bark bounds o'er ocean's foam,
What charms him most when evening star
Smiles o'er the wave?—to dream of home.
Fond thoughts of absent friends and loves
At that sweet hour around him come,
His heart's best joy where'er he roves,
That dream of home, that dream of home.

The cockatoo screamed suddenly and in terror. I started up only to find myself confronted by a man armed with an axe, the self-same villainous face I had seen in the wood. I started up only to be felled with a tremendous blow on the head. It was a murderous blow dealt with murderous intent.

I reeled and fell, my elbow striking against the piano keys and evolving a discordant crash. But a louder crash followed—the crash of breaking glass, and I saw my noble Kaiser spring in through the window like a great wild wolf, throttle and floor my assailant—then—all was a blank with me for a time.

When I recovered consciousness, the noble dog was licking my face, but the tramp was gone. In his anxiety about me, I suppose, Kaiser had permitted him to escape, but the fellow must have been severely torn. He was traced next day all through the wood by a trail of blood, and at one place he must have sunk to the ground and lain for some time, for here beneath a tree, where the ground was deeply bedded with withered pine-needles, there was quite a large pool.

But the tramp was never found.

"Dear old Kaiser, come and let me pat you."

But for all that, and for all this, Miss Mittson's cottage is a dear little house, and sweetly quiet, and I really mean to take it again next winter, but after nightfall Kaiser shall lie in the rustic porch, and on my table cheek-by-jowl with my ink-stand shall be—my revolver.

THE TESTIMONY OF A DREAM.

BY THEO GIFT.

Author of "Pretty Miss Bellew," "A Matter of Fact Girl," &c., &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

THE PHOTOGRAPH.

IT may save time here to say at once that Mr. James was successful in his inquiries; not immediately, for, as it turned out, Mr. Lewis Moffat had gone abroad, first to Australia and thence to the Cape, where he was residing at some mining place up the country, when he happened to come across a newspaper containing one of Mr. James's advertisements, and answered it at once in a letter in which he enclosed full credentials as to his identity with the person wanted.

A great deal of correspondence ensued; and when Mr. Moffat, who was speedily ascertained to be neither married nor engaged, came to know the terms of his uncle's will, it was necessary that some of this correspondence should include me; and I think it says something for the unromantic and practical side of our characters that two young people, situated as we were, should have been able to interchange perfectly friendly and unconstrained letters with one another notwithstanding the uncertain and peculiar relations between us. Even mother, who began by continually adjuring me "not to set myself against him," held up her hands and declared that the boys and girls now-a-days were so much more cool and sensible than they were in her youth that she didn't know what the world was coming to; while Lucy shook her golden head plaintively and said it was all wrong altogether, and she didn't approve of it a bit. In every story she had ever read, where the heroine became suddenly enriched on condition of marrying some one unknown, she was sure either to be already engaged to some deserving youth in poor circumstances, and with a mystery attaching to him, to whom, renouncing all her golden prospects, she vowed eternal fidelity only to find out that he was himself the unknown heir in question; or else her sensitive feelings were so outraged by the mere terms of the will that, not content with at once repudiating money and lover together, she thought it necessary to engage herself as kitchen-maid to the latter, falling desperately in love with him as soon as possible afterwards, and receiving the offer of his hand and heart in that menial capacity.

"In either case they marry. I'm afraid that is a *sine quâ non*," sighed Lucy; "but at least they do it gracefully; forced into it, as it were, and against their wills. They don't discuss it as calmly as if it were a question of accepting or refusing a second help of meat; or sit down and write to each other letters like these:—

"My dear Miss Luscombe,—I don't doubt you're a very nice young woman in your way; but I can't come home to look at you just yet, being more pleasantly engaged with seeing after a delightful mine, full of silver and gold, which my less than delightful fellow-miners are always trying to make free with whenever my back is

turned. Please, therefore, to keep yourself on hand, and wait patiently for me, till I have leisure to put in an appearance.' Or—

"My dear Mr. Moffat,—Pray don't hurry yourself. No doubt you are very nice also; but I have never met a man yet whom I liked better than £500 a-year; and, thanks to the elastic wording of the will, I fancy you will easily be induced to spare me that, even if I have to leave you the remainder.

"P.S.—I am eight-and-twenty, shamelessly immoral as regards "tipping" beggar children, and my grandfather was gouty."

Now, of course all this was very absurd of Lucy, for, as I need hardly say, no such letters as these ever passed between Louis Moffat and myself; and in truth, as to his, I must frankly own that I thought them very sensible and sincere, and felt pleasantly towards him from the first moment of reading them. He made no pretence of thinking lightly of the fortune which (owing to his quarrel with his uncle) he owned he never expected to come to him; but he had of late become the part-owner of a silver-mine, which at the present moment was promising better than it had ever done before; and if he were to come to England before securing some suitable person to watch over his interests, the loss to him might be a heavier one than even £500 a-year (should an unlucky fate leave him that share of the fortune) could atone for.

"But, on the other hand," he wrote, "I don't at all want to drive Miss Luscombe into refusing me without appeal. That she is much too good for me, I am ready to believe; for I have led a rough sort of life since I was cut adrift from my home moorings, and am not much of a lady's man at best; while the very fact of her having managed to stand my uncle's tyranny for two years, and yet win his respect, shows her to be nobler-minded and sweeter-tempered than the generality of her sex, and more likely to make him who wins her a happy man. If I stand any chance at all of being that individual, I think it could only be by earning her good opinion as a friend before obtruding myself on her as a lover; and therefore I am the more averse to hurrying matters in any way. Will you represent this to her, and ask her to take possession at the Manor for the present, at any rate? I suppose I may not write to her myself?" And then, in a postscript, he said how much he wished Mr. James could get, "by hook or crook," a photograph of me, and send it to him. Mr. James forwarded the letter to me, and in return I wrote to Mr. Moffat myself, enclosing him the photograph he asked for, "in exchange for one of himself," and telling him that I thought it only natural that *friends* (which I hoped we might be in any case) should like to know how each other looked; that I thought all he said very frank and sensible, but that I should not go to the Manor, as I looked on it as his house, not mine, and very much preferred my own home.

Dreadfully prosaic and unsentimental all this, wasn't it? No wonder Lucy was shocked at me; and yet, when all by myself, I sometimes blushed at the amount of thought I gave to this unknown man, and the number of times I read and re-read the letter, which my mother and sister thought so cold-blooded and matter-of-fact. To me it read

like the first chapter of a pleasant, sensible book—a book which might grow pleasanter as it went on; and in my heart I even owned that it would be a disappointment to me if it did not, and one quite apart from the mercenary side of the matter. To the eyes of my inexperience £500 a-year (if I got it) seemed as inexhaustible in its luxurious possibilities as £5,000; and as for Chesilton Manor, it had no pleasant reminiscences for me.

The next pleasant excitement was a letter to me from Detoitspan, South Africa—a much shorter one than the other, but very grateful, in a hearty manly way, for mine and the photograph; and enclosing one of himself in return—"not a good specimen, he was afraid," he said, "but the only one he had had taken out there, and even it was not his own, but the property of a friend at Cape Town, to whom he had sent for it."

"Why, mother—come here, mother!" Lucy cried out, as we two girls sat curled up on the sofa, with our heads bent over the portrait in question. "Do look at Mary's lover! he's quite *handsome*!—very handsome, if it wasn't for the beard. I hate beards always; but his eyes are beautiful, and full of sentiment. I have a good mind to fall in love with him myself, if she doesn't."

"Do, and then I shall feel obliged to refuse him on moral grounds, and so keep the £500 a-year for mother and me to live on," I said, laughing. "We must take care, however, that he doesn't fall in love with you first, and refuse *me*, for what would become of the property then?"

"Why, you would get it, and of course would magnanimously hand it back to us at once," Lucy chimed in. "But, seriously, mother dear, isn't Mary's 'fatur' almost nice-looking enough to be worthy of her?"

Yes, it had come to that. From the day his photograph arrived, Lewis Moffat was never spoken of save as "Mary's fatur," or "Mary's lover;" and as the weeks went by, and I heard from the owner of that title more than once, my remonstrances against the use of it grew more faint, and the chance of my ever repudiating it altogether more unlikely. In truth, the pictured face was a nice one, bearded though it might be; with dark eyes, a head slightly bald, but well set on the shoulders; and a grave, gentle expression, pleasant to look on. His letters were pleasant too, and seemed to be answering his desire of making us friends before we even met; an end to which the interchange of photographs had certainly assisted. With his written words and pictured face before me, I could not feel that he was any longer a stranger; and the refined cast of the latter seemed in itself to deny all the imputations of past rioting or present roughness laid upon him by either his uncle or himself. What he thought of mine he had too much delicacy to tell me directly; but to Mr. James he said so many pretty things, that I was glad no one was by to see how I blushed over the old lawyer's letter retailing them to me; and I am afraid he heard in the same manner our opinion of himself; for when at last a letter came, saying that he intended leaving Detoitspan on the following day, and hoped to be with us in six weeks or so, he added this postscript to it:—

"I am sorry that you and your sister dis-

approve of beards so much; but since you do, mine shall have disappeared before I venture to call on you. I hope you are prepared for the change it will make in my appearance. I think that appendage an improvement."

"It mattered very little to me. The main fact was the announcement that he was actually coming. Truly, there was no lack of excitement now in our once monotonous lives.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN WHO DID IT.

AND NOW I come to the most curious part of my story. During all the last four years, the years which elapsed between 1876 and 1880, I had been gradually forgetting that strange, ghastly dream of mine in the hayfield at Crawley, until scarcely even the shadow of it remained in my memory. Not that I can quite say I had forgotten it entirely. There are things which from their own nature, or the circumstances attending them, it is impossible quite to forget, even if one should live to be a hundred; but I had done the next best thing, I had buried its memory. I never spoke of it, never dwelt on it; and as no single thing had occurred during the last three years and a half to recall it to my mind, I had ceased even to think of it, save in those moments of loneliness or depression when unpleasant thoughts so often rise unbidden to the mind, still less to let it shadow my nightly slumber, or make me dread, as I often did at first, to look suddenly in a stranger's face lest I should recognize in it the unknown murderer of the Brighton land agent.

This being so—and I beg you to believe it, for it is only the truth—it was the more remarkable that just at the time when we first began to expect Lewis Moffat home the horrible memory of that old dream began to recur to me with a vividness and persistency which no effort of mine could dissipate. More than once my night's rest was disturbed by a reproduction of the whole terrible scene, so exact in its portraiture of the original vision that I woke crying out and trembling with fright; while go where I would, the long banished, but never wholly obliterated, features of the principal actor in it seemed ever before me, haunting me with the baleful stare of the guilty, bloodshot eyes, the coarse, tremulous mouth and bruised forehead. Even if I shut my eyes I saw it. It came between me and the mild gaze of Lewis Moffat's portrait. It seemed to shake its red threatening hand over the page where his had traced the promise of his coming. One day I took heart of grace and told my mother about it.

"Don't scold me, mother, don't laugh at me," I pleaded. "You know how I did put away the thought of that horrible thing before; how I never mentioned it to any one but you even when it was made more dreadful by the news of the actual murder; how I wouldn't let myself be frightened! But I am frightened now, and I cannot understand it. I am not even in love with Lewis Moffat—how could I be when I have never even seen him or he me? It isn't possible for people to have so much as a strong sympathy with one another when they are strangers—and yet I never think of Mr. Moffat now but I see that scowling face

behind his, that red, uplifted hand; I feel some deadly trouble is awaiting him—hanging over him. Mother, mother dear, take my hands in yours; let me whisper it to you. You will think me mad, I know, but I shall be mad if I don't say it to some one. I believe *that man* is on board the ship with Lewis Moffat now; and *that every day that brings the one nearer brings the other too*. There is some evil impending, and I don't know what it is. I can do nothing to prevent it. Mother, can't you help me?"

To say that my poor mother was greatly alarmed and distressed by this outbreak is nothing. If it had come from Lucy indeed she might have put it down to a mere attack of nerves or hysteria, and met it by alternate doses of china and ignatia, repeated every two hours; but—Mary, who had nothing the matter with *her* spine, who hadn't an ounce of hysteria in her composition—Mary, no item in whose hair or complexion pointed to globules corrective of imaginativeness or superstition! It was a case beyond even homœopathy. Mother sent for the doctor.

But when he came what could he do? He found a woman in perfect health and sanity who told him clearly, if somewhat shame-facedly, her story, referred him to the newspaper reports of the Crawley murder for the strange corroboration of her first dream, and did not even speak of the latter as a vision; or propound any explanations of her own. He could only say it was very extraordinary, "most extraordinary" indeed, and suggest that I might have been overdoing myself of late, suffering from too much excitement perhaps; and in want of fresh air. "What did I say to a week at Brighton now? Nothing like Brighton, and a nice tonic, for driving away the blues;" and then he wrote out a prescription for me and said goodbye.

We did go to Brighton for a week (mother wished it and declared we could easily afford so slight an extravagance) but it was of no use. The vision which haunted both my waking and sleeping hours, did not disappear; and only the night before we returned to town I had a worse dream than usual; for I thought that Lewis Moffat had arrived and was hastening towards me with a bright smile on his face, and his hands outstretched to greet me; but as I put out mine to him, somehow—suddenly he vanished, the pleasant face paled and faded away, and instead there was the inflamed one of the Crawley murderer glaring close, close to mine; and his dreadful hand closing on my helpless fingers.

The next day, on arriving in town, we found two telegrams awaiting us; one from Mr. Moffat, announcing his safe arrival at Lisbon, and hoping to be with us in another four or five days at latest; the other from Mr. James containing the same news, and stating that he should of course come up to town to receive his client.

So far then my previsions of evil had been entirely without foundation. Lewis Moffat was safe and well at the time he wrote that telegram, and therefore might be hoped to remain so for the remainder of his voyage. Perhaps then the danger hanging over his head was *not* on board with him. Perhaps it might be awaiting him on the shores of this country; for what more favorite haunt than the docks and their neighbourhood for ruffians and criminals of all classes; and who

could tell (*I was superstitious now, I own it*) but that these strange forebodings of mine might have been sent to enable me to save the home-coming wanderer from being set on, robbed, or even made away with in the very first hour of his return to the country from which he had been so long absent.

Mr. James, as I have mentioned, had said he was coming up to town to meet the traveller; and with all my heart I longed not only to urge him to do so, but to be there in time to board the steamer on its arrival, and not to leave the young man till he was securely established in some safe and respectable hotel; but how *could* I do so? How was it possible for a modest woman, situated as I was with regard to Lewis Moffat, to make such a request to a lawyer I had only seen once, and take so forward an interest in the safe keeping of a man I had never seen at all, without having even an explanation to put forward in excuse for its apparent indelicacy? The impossibility of it, and of showing myself to two comparative strangers in such an apparently unmaidenly light, combined with the anxiety attendant on my enforced passivity, was making me quite pale and thin; and it was therefore an immense relief when, a day sooner than we had expected, we received a note from Mr. James saying that the steamer had *arrived*, and that not being able to hurry up to town quickly enough himself he had sent a clerk instead with orders to board the vessel, see Mr. Moffat, and put himself under his instructions; that this had been done, and that he had since arrived in town, seen the gentleman himself, and hoped to have the pleasure of bringing him to call on us on the following evening. He added:

"Mr. Moffat is looking very well, and is in manner by no means the rough miner his modesty would lead you to expect. By the way I forgot to mention that the clerk I sent to meet him, though a new-comer in my office, was originally employed by the firm who used to transact Mr. Moffat senior's legal business ten years ago, and knew his nephew well. He considered Mr. Lewis very little changed from what he was then; though you must expect to see a somewhat different man from the original of your photograph, partly in consequence of the removal of his beard, and partly of an accident which I will leave him to explain to you himself."

So once again my previsions had come to naught. The very precautions I had not dared to suggest had been taken; and apparently with no need for them. Lewis Moffat was safe, well, and *here*. In a few hours we should meet; and on our first impressions with regard to one another would probably depend the question whether we were to be man and wife in the days to come, or simply acquaintances whom chance had brought into friendly relations.

It was Mr. James who came first, however, and alone. We had naturally expected him with his new client, but he explained to us that the latter having various matters of business to attend to which might keep him till late had arranged to meet the old gentleman at our house instead of keeping him in attendance on him—an arrangement of which Mr. James highly approved.

"Hanging about draughty hotels isn't the pleasantest work for gouty old fellows like me," he said cheerfully; "and as I must go back to

Chesilton to-morrow, and both you and Mr. Moffat seemed to wish for my presence to break down any little awkwardness attendant on your first meeting, I thought you ladies would excuse my taking the liberty of suggesting the present arrangement. But how is this, Miss Luscombe?" (turning to me as he spoke) "Do our red-cheeked provincial lasses make London ladies in general look pale, or have you been unwell of late? You look as white as though we were going to carry you off and marry you to my client whether you will or no."

I laughed and said I had no such fear, and if I was pale it was the cold weather made me so. I did not want him to think me "missish" or nervous; though indeed it was natural enough for me to be both, but mother interrupted me. In her triumph, her natural, innocent triumph and delight at the utter breakdown of all my dream visions and forebodings, and at her own good sense in having refused to listen to them from the beginning, she was unable to keep them to herself, and heedless of my glances of entreaty insisted on telling Mr. James the whole story of the original dream with (as she put it) the "odd coincidence" of its partial verification, and my recent imaginings and terrors.

To the surprise of both of us, however (to mine most certainly), Mr. James listened to the whole recital without so much as a smile; rather indeed as if he were both startled and impressed by it: asking me a question now and then, such as: "Was I a Spiritualist, or given to dreams in general?" Both of which I answered very decidedly in the negative; interrupting with a hasty, "Yes, yes, quite right, quite correct. I remember all about *that*," when mother was describing the inquiry into the Crawley murder; and muttering, "Strange indeed! very strange," more than once in the course of the narrative. Even poor mother felt her elation to be checked by the manner of her auditor, and hastened to add at the conclusion—

"But you see, Mr. James, nothing came of it after all. Mr. Moffat has neither been murdered on the way, nor on arriving here, and all her fears were mere foolishness. Mary herself sees that now, and I daresay she is vexed with me for telling you about them, but I know you won't betray her or—"

Mr. James looked at me.

"You *do* think it foolishness now then?" he asked; and I tried to smile as I replied,

"I—suppose so; seeing that (as my mother says) nothing has come of my fears."

"And yet they are not quite at rest," he said so shrewdly that I felt myself colouring, and answered—

"If they are not I honestly think they ought to be, that is— But, Mr. James, you did not answer mother just now. I do hope you will be kind enough not to repeat a word of this—this foolishness, if you will—to Mr. Moffat."

"My dear, Miss Luscombe, what do you take me for? I thought you knew that a confidence to a lawyer is as sacred as a Roman Catholic's confession to his priest. In return let me ask you to indulge me a little more about this curious psychological affair. You were going to say something after 'that is'—to suggest some doubt still on your mind. What is it?"

My colour deepened.

"But indeed, Mr. James, that is what I cannot tell you. I have asked myself and I don't know. Perhaps my mother is right, and it is nothing but nerves, but——"

"Well? but——"

"But when you spoke of your clerk—the one you said knew Mr. Lewis Moffat before—I wondered, that is, I felt as if I should like to see him."

"My dear Mary!" cried mother in tones of real annoyance, and even Mr. James looked surprised; he only answered, however—

"My clerk? Donkin? Well, as it happens, he was to return to Chesilton this evening, and has doubtless done so. Still, I could easily send either himself or his photograph up to you if you liked, or—— Stay, didn't your mother say something about a sketch you made of this dream murderer's face. If you still have it, and would show it me, I could tell you in a minute if it bears any resemblance to the young man in question."

I got up, unlocked my desk, and taking out the sketch gave it him. As I did so I think he uttered a sharp exclamation; but if so it was drowned in a louder one from mother—

"Hush, hush! Wasn't that a cab stopping at the door? Yes, Fanny is going to it. Mary, dear, pray drop that horrible subject. What would Mr. Moffat——"

She stopped short, for Fanny, quicker than usual in her movements, was already opening the drawing-room door, and ushering in a tall, sunburnt looking stranger. I heard her say, "Mr. Lewis Moffat, ma'am." I saw mother rise gracefully, and Mr. James standing nearer to the door, with his grey head turned in a curious, watchful way to me; and then from *someone*—some voice, surely, surely, not mine!—there seemed to break a harsh, ringing cry—

"He! *That is the man!*—the man who murdered the land agent at Crawley. Oh! take him—for Christ's dear sake, take him—take him away!"

There was a thick cloud swooping down upon me—a cloud of darkness mixed with fiery sparks.

I could see nothing now; but through it, and through a strange roaring in my ears, I seemed to hear a confused buzz of voices; and one, fierce and strange to me, raised in a sort of shout—

"*Trapped by G—d!* So this was the game you wanted me for!"

After that it was all silence and blackness, and I knew nothing more.

Nor did I for a many week afterwards. Christmas—a sorrowful Christmas for mother and Lucy—had come and gone and the January's snows were beginning to thaw along the edges of the roof-tops and side-walks before the day when I was first able to lift my heavy eyelids to the anxious mother face bending over me, and ask in a trembling whisper—

"*The man—the murderer—where is he?*"

"Gone, gone away for ever, my darling. You will never see him again. Don't think of him," she said caressing me.

"And—and Lewis Moffat?" (my mind was still quite confused as to *what* had happened); "is he—safe?"

"Yes, my child, safe, and gone away. It was best so. Dear Mary, try to drink this, and don't talk;" but I was disobedient.

"Gone! Then—then I am not to marry him," I said dreamily, and wondered, as I fell asleep again, why mother should shudder all over and make no reply.

Some weeks later I learnt all about it. It was *Lewis Moffat* who had murdered the betting-man at Crawley, and who betrayed himself by his unguarded words in the first shock of my unexpected recognition. Cast adrift by his uncle, he had before long fallen into bad company in London; had been fleeced at play of every penny he possessed by the very man who afterwards found death at his hands; and had gradually sunk into such dire poverty, that he had not the price of a loaf of bread in his pocket, or a second shirt to his back. It was in this plight that, tramping from London to Brighton in search of some employment, he encountered early one morning, in a lane near the village of Crawley, the individual who had plundered him nearly a year previously, and who not only recognized him now, but greeted him with a brutal jest on his miserable appearance. Famished, tired, half-maddened already by his own degradation, and doubly so by the jeers of the scoundrel who had injured him, Lewis retorted by lifting the thick ash-stick he carried and striking his adversary a crushing blow on the head, just as the latter was in the act of getting over a stile to leave him. The attack was so sudden that the man never even uttered a sound, but reeled round and dropped face foremost on to a heap of stones in the pathway; and Lewis, blind to everything but the fact that his foe was for the moment at his mercy, continued to strike again and again at the prostrate form until his fury was sated, and the creature at his feet a lifeless, bloody corpse. Then, indeed, recollection came to him: recollection accompanied by intense horror of himself and dread of discovery; and it was under the influence of the latter emotion that he dragged the body to a convenient straw stack in the adjoining meadow, and heaped loose straw and sheaves above him. In doing so a pocket-book, containing ten sovereigns in gold and two ten-pound notes, fell from the murdered man's coat, and he picked it up and put it in his own pocket.

But, even though thus provided with means to escape, and conscious that hitherto he had been exceptionally fortunate in no one having neared the place, either during the commission of the crime or his subsequent hiding of the body, he was not sufficiently hardened to leave the scene at once and seek safety in flight. The thought that there *might* be life still left, that he might have acted too hastily in his terror and excitement, and that if he waited he might see his victim revive and rise up, chained him to the spot; and, after lying for hours under cover of some logs in a dry ditch, he chose a quiet moment in the evening, when no one was in sight, and cautiously approached the stack. As he did so, the flutter of some light garment caught his eye, and, on creeping nearer, what was his horror to see a young woman lying apparently asleep, with her head on the heap of straw which concealed his late enemy's corpse!

Appalled by the sight, he fled as fast as he

could; walked all that night, and reached Arundel in the morning, whence he took the first train to Portsmouth, changed there into one for Plymouth, and actually before the hue and cry of murder was fairly raised had shipped as deck-hand on board a vessel just starting for Sydney.

Luck had turned with him; for, no sooner did he arrive in Australia than he got work and prospered in it: doing so well that, when after a year and a half he left that country for the Cape, it was as a steady, hard-working man, with a good reputation and enough money to buy a small share in a promising silver mine at Detoitspan. That too, after many fluctuations, was doing well with him, when one day he came across the news of his uncle's death; and with many inward debates, though emboldened by the entire immunity from suspicion which had hitherto attended him, determined to return home and lay claim to the property which Mr. James's advertisement told him was waiting his appropriation.

And the photograph? Well, according to his own story, there was no intentional deception in that, but only what Mr. James had called it—an accident! A friend, whose home was in Cape Town, owned the only one he had ever had done of himself; and not being willing to delay his letter to me till another mail by asking for the portrait to be sent to Detoitspan and then forwarding it to England, he hit on the plan of enclosing the open letter to his friend's wife, begging her, in a note to herself, to put the photograph in the former, seal the envelope, and post it by the English mail then going out. Being in a hurry, or not reading the note carefully, she misunderstood his request, and, instead of his portrait, put up one of her own husband; and Moffat himself never found out the mistake until four months later, when he arrived at Cape Town on his way home.

This, then, was his own confession made to Mr. James on the night when I lay between life and death, and, when ignorant of how his identity with the long-sought-for Crawley murderer had come to be known, he poured forth the story of his crime and the excuses for it, while entreating that he might not be sent to the gallows for a sin committed in hot blood, and for which he had already suffered ten years of remorse and expatriation from home and friends. It was not till he had quite finished that the old lawyer spoke at all.

"You have forced me to hear this," he said then. "You must let me have an hour to think it over before I answer you;" and when the hour was over he went back, and, addressing the miserable, wild-eyed man awaiting him said—

"By your own confession, Mr. Moffat, you are guilty of this crime; and even had I no other evidence of it, it would be my duty to hand you over to the police to stand your trial on that alone. Nay, if you had not spoken a word this is what I should have done; for I hold in my hand a portrait of the Crawley murderer so accurately done that I recognized you by it the moment you entered this room, and could produce witnesses from Crawley who would doubtless identify you as having been seen about there at the time of the murder as easily as myself. This would be my duty as lawyer and a law-abiding citizen; but—fortunately for you—I am also an English gentleman and a man with sons of his own; and to entrap, even by accident, a criminal into confessing a crime committed under strong

provocation, and (as I dare to hope) long since repented of, is as repugnant to my feelings as it would be to the gentle natured woman who just now discovered, in the man approaching her as her future husband, the criminal of whose guilt she has for eight years (I will not tell you how) been aware. Under these circumstances, therefore, I don't say to you, 'Go; put the keel of a good ship between you and England, as fast as you can, and never return here,' because to do so would be misprision of felony on my own part; but I say this: I am going to my hotel to look up some papers bearing on this case, and shall leave you here and lock the door on you. If there happens to be another one to the room I don't see it; but I shall return two hours hence, and should I find you gone, and a written paper left on this table refusing Miss Luscombe's hand in marriage, absolutely and unequivocally, and signed with your name in full, I shall conclude that you have escaped me, and shall not trouble myself to make any further inquiries for you. What is more, if I also find another slip of paper with a name and address on it, I will (with Miss Luscombe's consent) forward yearly the interest of £10,000, that is £500 a year, to the person and place designated, provided the latter is nowhere in this country, nor even on the European continent."

Moffat fell on his knees, pouring out thanks and gratitude with almost frantic fervour, and Mr. James left the room. When he came back to it some hours later the renunciation and the address he had asked for were on the table.

"Mr. James," I said, when I had heard all this—I was still very weak and only just allowed on to the sofa in the drawing-room—"I am sure you are very sensible and good, and I am very, very grateful for all you have done; but you have forgotten one thing—what is to become of the rest of the property? I—I—please don't call me silly, but I can't be enriched at the expense of this wretched man, guilty as he may be; and more especially as it is I who would have refused him if I had known beforehand of his guilt. To take his house and lands now would seem like making a profit out of—oh, mother! can't you say it for me? You understand."

I saw Mr. James look at my mother, and she at him, and then she got up and took my head on to her shoulder.

"Yes, yes, my darling," she said; "I understand what you feel; but there is no need for you to feel it, for Providence has settled this matter for you. Lewis Moffat will never want any of the money, were you ever so willing to give it to him. The ship in which he sailed did not reach Sydney. There was a collision in the Channel, and John Stevens was among the number of those lost."

My story is done. I am conscious that it is a lame one; that it does not end as it should do; that, in fact, to be worked out well and artistically, not only the bare facts of that ghastly dream of mine, but all my subsequent forebodings and suspicions should have been verified; that the real murderer should have turned out to be one of Lewis Moffat's fellow miners, or the clerk who went to meet him, but this that I have told you is simply the truth, nothing more. I have not even an explanation to offer. Only all this happened four years ago; and mother, Lucy and I live at Chesilton Manor now, and are very happy.

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What shall I Drink ?





EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 14.]

LONDON: APRIL 4, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

OLD SWEETHEARTS.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON.

THE Transoms were poor and naturally proud. It was not an offensive pride, but a pride that prevented them taking kindly to any occupation that looked like a descent in the social scale. There was the tradition of better days, of the family's past importance. Horace Transom was a depressed man, he saw no halcyon future, he could not count upon a single old uncle or aunt with a full stocking leg—the species had been exhausted by a previous generation. Had he been rich, doubtless he would have been anxious over his one pet lamb, warding off cruel winds, the “could blast,” and sheltering it from scorching suns. Because he was poor, he had a family many sizes too large for him. As it was a vain hope to place his sons, he allowed matters to slide. At one time he had his seasons of agitated anxiety, but grey hairs seemed to bring him a more placable if not lymphatic humour. His worst quarters of an hour were those devoted to thinking of his girls. What he left behind him would be but a “drop in the ocean,” and the lads could do little for them, if they were not in a position to do well for themselves. He could not count upon the girls marrying well, Sandperch was such a poor corner, “a good deal of swap in the place,” as an old standard averred, accounts balancing at Christmas, no cash changing hands. Naturally spy young fellows ran away from a place where there was dearth of pocket money, and the odd ones who straggled in were not worth consideration. If they stayed, it was to experience a hand to mouth existence, when they departed from the scene, they were sadder and wiser men, their capital nil or considerably diminished. The girls were certainly a problem.

The boys—well, they helped him, and they had heaps of time to spare, and he his whole, or next to it. Was there a cricket match, two of the Transoms would be there; a social gathering, half

a dozen. Acidulous persons declared it shameful that Transom was so lethargic, his boys at a loose end up to manhood. They were active, intelligent, capable. There was Horace, twenty-two, actually reconciled to the Bohemian life the family led. When a man attains his majority, it is pleasurable to feel master of the situation. Horace did grumble at times when cash was a short article, but it was only when he saw other fellows of his age and grade, fishing, no, landing, loose silver out of capacious pockets.

Transom had looked to the four points of the compass. He had no influence, whichever way he looked, outlay was necessary, the cost of an outfit, a premium, being saddled with a year's charges. Credit—well, yes, people fought shy of him. Weary of baiting the father, one of those persons who can find time to busy their minds with other people's affairs, turned to the ingenuous Horace.

“Don't you think you ought to be getting into something?”

“I shouldn't at all mind,” said Horace calmly. “I hope something will turn up before long.”

A dreadful wind-up there would be some day. Transom dead, the brokers in, the family adrift. Even if such a catastrophe was staved off, it was “a moral” the family could not guide the helm.

But these lads were favourites everywhere. They had all the accomplishments that bring in no remuneration. They could ride, play cricket, dance, sing. One could “tootle” very nicely on the flute, another play the violin, and Jack, the youngest, had pitched upon an extraordinary instrument—the accordeon. Ah, it was certain he was preparing himself for peregrinating the towns and villages, his eye keen for coppers thrown on the roadway, stored in his memory a list of feasts and fairs, occasions for double-shuffle and dancing in public-houses.

But it is with Horace we have to do. He was certainly in love, or drifting fast that way. The youth that is poor, in total ignorance whether the morrow will provide, never having earned sixpence

in his life, is seldom abashed at the sight of a young lady. If she is pretty, he is decidedly rash in his proceedings; he falls in love with her, and he is not a person of half measures. The young man with expectations is apt to consider himself a "somebody," suspicious of every feminine advance or glint of the eye; difficult to suit. He so weighs and considers that love with him is an element of quite a different character. There is no romance in it. Happy youths, penniless and *insouciant*, who fall in love, because "it's their nature to," they should have Nabobs for uncles, be named after them, and the will proved in their favour the week before the wedding.

Horace's lady-love was in every way desirable. She was not a vociferous person; tacitly she accepted his society. The wonder would have been had she given him the cold shoulder. Lookers on were surprised that a young fellow of his buoyant temperament should be attracted to so quiet a girl as Ethel Robin. Well, Robin was not overburdened with olive branches; were he reckoned up, perhaps he would be found as comfortably off as any family-man in Sandperch. It showed that young Horace Transom was not all surface; he had a little calculation. Whoever married Ethel Robin, her father would take in hand the son-in-law. To Horace's honour no such thought entered his head. He donned his best clothes, perfumed his hair and his handkerchief, and went courting, regarding the hours spent in the society of the fair one his happiest. He liked to feel spruce. He liked sitting out of doors in the shade of the weeping ash at the corner of the grass-plot. Bent over his stomach, it was a pleasing occupation tracing with his stick circles and other geometrical figures where the grass refused to grow. For a young man by nature frivolous, it was astonishing the quiet gravity of his talk. Sometimes he would sit without speaking, satisfied with the click of Ethel's needle, or rapt contemplating the rapid jerks of her crochet hook. She would be as grave and staid, smoothing out her work occasionally, satisfying her soul with the proof of her diligence. When the twain did talk it was never so much of the future as of themselves—past fixtures, dances, the idiosyncracies of other loving couples. Neither of them desired a future so very ardently, they were happy as they were. Seated on a rustic chair in shadow, but the sun shining, they would have been content to remain until the crack of doom. Horace found it pleasant coming to Robin's place; it was an oasis, a refuge. Everything was so neat and orderly and refined, indoors and out. It was an ideal existence living in such a house. At home affairs were a little mixed, disorderly. The low old house with its coating of ivy was pretty enough, but it had a forlorn appearance. Money was wanted to make it and keep it nice. The interior was terribly time-worn; walls, furniture, woodwork, curtains dingy, in dire need of restoration. Horace looked upon his sweetheart's home as the *beau idéal* of what a home should be.

One autumn day Horace and Ethel were seated under the ash. Horace was easy in one of his least charming attitudes, his hat tilted back on his head, his hands between his knees grasping his stick in the middle, which he swung with the precision of a pendulum. Long practice was making him perfect; but we may have too much

of a good thing. He tired, leaned back, tilting his hat as much forward.

"I saw Nelly Forman this morning," said Ethel quietly.

"Oh," murmured Horace, with interest; "and how was she?"

"She is quite changed," said Ethel. "You know she was something of a madcap. She is quite serious now, but she is to be married in the spring."

"That is the end of all the nice girls," returned Horace, a little irritably.

"Well, why should it not be?"

"Why not go on courting for ever?"

"I don't know whether that would answer," responded Ethel doubtfully, ceasing work, holding it in her lap, and looking dreamily before her.

"Of course it wouldn't," said Horace, roused for the first time in his life, feeling himself an useless appendage, and no great catch for anybody. "I wonder when we shall marry."

"You take it for granted," Ethel returned, the dimples deepening.

"Of course I do," said Horace coolly. "Do you think I should come here spending my time if I didn't think that the sequel? I don't think you would tolerate me coming if my company was utterly distasteful."

"You enliven one's life, Horace," Ethel retorted mischievously, laughing quietly.

"Do I, by George? A very little goes a long way, then. I've always thought the hours I spend here my quiet ones. I enjoy some, some make me feel a little vexed; they are those when I get thinking. But I enjoy coming here: out of doors it is so pleasant to mind and eye; indoors it feels like home. At our house there is always a racket, or it is 'up on heaps.' Every one marches where he lists. It's nice to have things in common, but sometimes one wants a quiet corner to one's self."

"Then you come here for solitude, Mr. Zimmerman?"

"I come for company, change, comfort; I try to think you and I are happy together. I can't help but think, but I stop myself from dreaming. What was I saying? I wondered when you and I would marry. Ah, yes! I wish to Heaven something would turn up—something I could do. The deuce is, I scarcely know what I am fit for."

"Anything," said Ethel, with sweet encouragement. "A man has no business to feel faint-hearted, or think disparagingly of himself. You have a capable head, capable hands, a clear and quick intelligence, agreeable voice"—here she blushed. "What can a man desire more?"

"You are an angel!" said Horace, his voice low and much moved. "If Polly wasn't looking out of the drawing-room window, I would kiss you for that. It is a debt I have to pay, remember." His arm was at her back, his hand pressed her shoulder gently. "Ethel, I love you very dearly! I think you care for me just a little."

A slight flush of colour, a parting of the pretty lips, her eyes meeting his, the lids quivering slightly, revealed her disposition towards him. Then her eyes sank before the long-continued tender scrutiny in his.

It was certain that he loved her; he had never

made so loud a profession before. But it is not necessary to asseverate to convince. Yes, she loved him in return. She would not be ashamed to confess it; and he was so handsome, well knit, so ingenuous. She felt proud of such a lover. And she had never put herself forward to attract him—a thought that added to her satisfaction. She had seen a little of that sort of thing.

"Ethel, I begin to think I ought to be in a line now. We are an idle lot yonder. There isn't one of us earning sixpence a-week. That can't go on for ever. I don't feel altogether to blame; no questions are asked until it comes to wanting a few shillings; the governor parts as if it was his life's blood, so we don't go to him until we are desperate. But, hang it, twenty-two—it is high time I was above that sort of thing."

Polly opened the French window.

"Ethel!"

"Well?" answered the girl on the garden chair.

"Tea!" said Polly, latching the windows.

"I'll make tracks," said Horace, rising.

"You can stay if you like," said Ethel.

"I like," answered he promptly.

"It will not be so very wrong," said Ethel; "mamma took train for Bedford this morning, and papa went out an hour ago."

"That is grievous news. You'll protect me from Polly. I shiver at what she may do."

"Much you are frightened of her!"

"She is qualified for anything."

"I'll tell her."

"All right; I shall get out of it in some way."

"Polly, what do you think? Horace says you are qualified for anything."

"I won't have that character for nothing," declared Polly, snatching up the teapot.

"What are you going to do?" Horace asked, with pretended alarm.

"You'll feel in a moment."

"What harm was there in what I said?"

"It was a base aspersion."

"Nonsense. I meant you were in every way qualified for a good husband."

"Oh-h-h," deprecated Ethel, amazed at such effrontery.

"That is not to say any man is good enough for a wife," said Polly, with cutting emphasis.

"You are perfectly right, Polly; men are a worthless lot."

Horace would have thought little of what he said, but for a quick glance of Polly's, as quickly withdrawn. He was not worth much—Polly thought it. It was true, the Transoms were "a worthless lot."

There was a sound of the hall door opening, of a walking-stick or umbrella point awaking the echoes of the stand, then feet on the tiled entrance floor.

"Pa!" ejaculated Polly, as if in the greatest of frights. "Horace, out of the room—quick—here by the window! Get under the table then."

"How can you be so ridiculous, Polly?"

"It pleases her," said Horace, with the air of a martyr; "and I can learn it."

"Fee-fi-fo-fum—this is how you go on when I am out of the way—eh? Pretty state of things!"

"Turn out the usurper, Pa!" cried Polly. "I wanted to scald him, but Ethel wouldn't hear of it."

"I'll go quietly," murmured Horace, abjectly.

"I think your impudence is refreshing," said Robin; "so I will be lenient."

"I haven't a doubt of the leniency," said Horace—a time-server.

"Come, Polly, where's that tongue?"

"Mine, papa? It is here."

"You vagabond! Ring for that other."

"I didn't think, Pa; I didn't know Horace was coming in" (a gentle push to the bell).

If there was a man in the wide world fond of his brood, it was Robin. In reason, he never refused the girls anything. It began to dawn upon him that his sway would soon be divided, the usurper getting the lion's share. Ah, well! one down, another up; that is how the world progresses. He was a cheery stoic. He would not live for ever. He had no wish to leave either child solitary. He would be happier making his exit, leaving them with new ties. He had no mercenary views, but he felt that he must discountenance the pretender, the adventurer. The prince must have satisfactory credentials. Lately he had come to think Horace Transom was in earnest. Months back he had thought little of the young fellow putting in an appearance. But of late Horace's daily visits gave him food for thought. He liked the lad, desiring for Ethel no better fellow. But Horace was running to waste. He was trained to nothing. If, like the heavy father in the play, he placed his hands over them—"My children, be happy!" how on earth was grist coming to the mill? Transom was not in a position to retire from his field, and give up his emoluments. He had other children. Formerly he had regarded the Transoms' system of joggling along in the world with indifference, as no business of his. Now he felt indignant. He would have acted differently; he would have cut down expenses here and there, put his shoulder to the wheel, knocked off every luxury, lived on skim-milk. But we can legislate admirably for others.

"You're going Horace, are you? I have a call to make before I turn in. I will go with you. Shout when you're ready."

Soon Horace was shouting.

"Now," thought Robin, "I must do it. It is a job I don't like, but it is folly to put it off any longer."

"I wished to have a bit of talk to you," said Robin, linking his arm in Horace's, "man to man. If you are affronted, I can't help it; I have the right to speak, I suppose?"

"I don't think you will affront me," said Horace, with a hazy notion of what was coming.

"That's the answer I hoped to get from a young fellow aspiring to be a son-in-law, for that's about it, I suppose, eh?" Horace received a playful dig in the ribs. Horace could not help laughing at the direct way Robin came to the point. "Now, have you said anything serious to my Ethel; I have a motive for asking?"

"I am very fond of her," said Horace; "to-day I said more to her than ever I have done before. Were I only in anything that looked like keeping a roof over our heads I should have asked for more, come to you to sanction our engagement."

"Those are your sentiments, eh?"

"They are."

"Then they do you credit. You have forestalled me. I was about putting a plain fact be-

fore you. You know there is all the difference between a man in a form for getting a living, and a man without a plan. My boy, there is no one that I know has a more creditable family than your father, good looking all round, three fine sons, not one of them ploughing his way. I don't doubt you are of help to him, but he'd do just as well without you all. But that really is not my business. I am only justified in talking to you, Horace. I don't want Ethel to give you up or you Ethel, nothing of the kind. But I don't want things to slide on, so that it will be a wrench to her, if you are perforce compelled to ride away. We are of one mind that an engagement would be premature, eh?"

"Yes," assented Horace, slowly.

"That can come. Meanwhile," Robin paused a moment, "meanwhile, I think you should not follow up my little girl so closely. I don't like having to tell you brutally that you are here too often, but it must be done for her future peace of mind. The day your prospects are anything like—I don't care what occupation you are in—come to me and I will ratify anything. I may dab down a little on account, until the day comes for a division of the spoil. I shan't leave so much, but no doubt the little will be useful to a family man. Now?"

"I shall comply, of course. But what I'm to fly to, the deuce knows, I don't," replied Horace, so despondently Robin pitied the young fellow.

"Don't get downhearted," encouraged he, "keep your weather eye open. I don't consider you a proud fellow, but if you possess any of the commodity, sink it. You know, heaven helps those who help themselves." Robin held out his hand, "we are no worse friends?"

"Certainly not," said Horace.

"Then good luck attend you. I want my girls to be happy, and I believe Ethel's future happiness rests with you."

When Robin returned to his house, he ordered Polly away to bed, and a little conversation ensued between him and Ethel, ending with a kiss.

"My duck, I like him. His father is most to blame. If I don't stand to my guns, you know, there will be nothing done. There's grit in Horace, he only wants the lever. I mustn't have you tied to a log, it's bad enough when a man is."

Polly's mind was a little exercised that Horace so seldom came, Ethel so silent.

"He's stirred up," mused Robin with satisfaction; "we shall have him the day he feels himself strong."

The young fellow was at his house quicker than Robin had dreamed.

"I've got my chance," said Horace with hopeful gravity, "but I have to go far afield—Australia. I have to sail at once, so shall have to bid you all 'good-by' to-day. If I do well, I shall come back to you for Ethel. I mean to do well. But I will not bind Ethel—no. If she cares to be true——"

"Well, explain to her yourself, my boy," said Robin, a little overwhelmed. "I have an appointment, I am due in five minutes."

Robin hurried away, he had never bargained for this. Still the colony was turning out Cæsesars, if the papers were to be believed.

"Have you heard from Horace?" shouted Robin one day to Hector Transom.

"We had a letter a week ago."

"Humph, how does he get on?"

"Bread and cheese," vouchsafed Hector nonchalantly. "He writes, fellows here don't know what work is. They have to pan to over there, those of high degree."

"I must not breathe a word," murmured Robin, "no news must be good news. I've watched the post, no letter from him since that one to say he had landed. The affair will die a natural death. Lomax is fond of the girl I can see. I wouldn't give a pin to choose between them. I fancy Lomax and Ethel will pull it off, if he gives her time."

Hector Transom was reminded that he had not replied to his brother. He wrote that day. A little distance seemed to exist between the two houses. In his letter Hector mentioned that Robin had been making inquiries, asking how the exile was getting on.

"By-the-by, dear old man," put in Hector, "I think it only fair to tell you, Lomax is often at Robin's. The talk is that he is after your old sweetheart. I don't say it is so, but I have seen them out together, and the talk is strong."

"Do you still hear from Horace?" asked Robin some months later; "one of the girls had a letter from him, but he has dropped us."

"Yes," said Hector breezily. He resented Robin making so much of Lomax—on principle, gossips said it was only too barefaced. "He writes pretty regularly now. He threw up what he went to, he said he would begrey before he got a fortune—went up country. The old boy is doing well now. I fancy he is married or close upon it—a sheep run. He wrote for one of us to go out."

Robin was taken aback. Man's fidelity, what was it worth? That evening he broke it to Ethel, after confiding it to Lomax.

"No!" It was a woman's answer to a man who had pleaded hard. She would assign no reason, but he suspected it.

"You are a good man, Oswald, and I can trust you. You have made a mistake, you have set your heart on the wrong one. You will thank me some day for telling you this—Polly appreciates you, she might be made to care for you."

Lomax was anything but consoled. The child cries for the moon, and that was about his condition. Like the moth at the candle, he could not keep away from the house; but Ethel's words had sunk into his heart—in time they fruited. If he could not have Ethel, Polly was the nearest approach to her. He was consoled.

Thirty years! That seems a fair slice out of a man's life. In thirty years a man should forget more than some have learned; be weaned from home and kin and country. The desire to see old faces, test old friendships, tax the memory of old acquaintance, revisit old haunts, with Horace Transom gathered in strength year by year. It became the dream of his life. But he had a young family about him, and the wife of his bosom saw risk in the voyage to and fro. The dream remained a dream, and he became resigned that it should remain one. He had the same gentle ingenuous nature, it had endeared him to his new ties.

The years rolled on, and he was bereaved. He could be dispensed with for a twelvemonth. His

three sons, stalwart and ready-witted, were able to cope with the exigencies of the run. Knowing his heart's hunger, the lads urged him to make the trip. He rode across to Hector's place, and unsettled him.

"Recollect you are not fixed as your brother is," Hector's wife said sententially.

Horace sailed and Jack met him at Southampton. Jack was in the old house, in his father's shoes. To say that Horace scarcely knew the place, would be asserting too much, but he was surprised. The house and grounds presented no longer a demoralized appearance. Jack had married well—a brisk woman. She kept her husband to the collar.

"You must ask your wife if you may live," had been a saying of the poor father. Horace recollected it and smiled to himself.

Seeing how Jack was ruled, Horace was in love with his brother's wife from the first moment, her welcome was so genuine. The old house was to be his head-quarters; he could sally out paying visits, but he was to consider "The Nook" his home. Of course there were his sisters (their marriages had dispelled the father's anxiety), and the old friends who had cricketed and boated and danced with laudable energy. These sisters were in a way little girls when Horace left home; the youngest remembered him—memory kept up by hearing Horace constantly spoken of; but she had a hazy recollection of that far back time.

Horace went to pass a little time with this one. She lived in a small town about twenty miles distant from Sandperch.

"There is a Miss Robin living here," Nora communicated the morning after his arrival. "Her sister lives in a neighbouring village. Mrs. Lomax? You remember the Robins. The father died, you know. The single daughter has come here to be near Mrs. Lomax. Would you care to renew acquaintance; I will invite her to spend the evening with us. She will be able to converse with you of old times. Shall I call?"

"If you will," said Horace, "I should like to see her."

"Jack told me you were fond of the Robins."

"I liked poor old Robin," confessed the Australian.

"According to Jack, you liked the girls," said Nora, mischievously.

"So I did; had I stayed in England, I should have married one."

"Humph, you have a chance yet," retorted Nora, "Miss Robin is not ill looking. I cannot see that she ages a bit. But don't you fall in love with her."

"Polly," concluded Horace Transom, reflectively, "now I should have thought Polly would have been the one to marry. I shall be glad to see her. I wonder if she will speak of Ethel without me leading up to it."

He had feverish until the evening came. He had not had one *sympathetic* talk of the past. Jack was much his junior, the girls came after Jack.

"Now go into the room, Horace," murmured Nora, her eyes bright. "She has come. She said she would not fail. She had heard you were in England, and so wished to see you."

"I might have gone to her house," said the Australian, with his hand on the door-knob. "I did not know whether she would care to see me."

As Horace opened the door, a lady rose from an ottoman near the window, her hand extended. Her face, yet youthful in aspect, was full of kindness and welcome. Transom was naturally stately in his attitude and bearing, but he was moved out of his habit. He was a youth, the years were a shadow, his hand went out, then the smile died out of his face.

"Not—not my old friend Polly? It is Mrs. Lomax? I scarcely apprehend!"

"Yes, yes, you do, Horace," said she, retaining his hand and looking steadfastly into his eyes. "I am Ethel!"

"Yes, I thought so—Mrs. Lomax?"

"No—Polly married Oswald Lomax."

"You are Ethel, and I have been misled," said he slowly and pained. "What a mistake Hector must have made. My poor dear sweetheart of the old days, you have been cruelly used."

"Hector went by public opinion. I think every one thought Lomax came to see me—but you see it was Polly."

Horace was silent for a few moments; the past had to be accepted.

"I should have died but for some friendly people," murmured he; "I had fever. They nursed me through and I stayed on. There was a livelihood. Then came Hector's letter to me, and I hesitated no longer. The old people had looked for the issue, and I believe had thought me unaccountably backward. My wife died last year. I have three fine lads, they urged me homeward, I think they fancied I had a little heart-hunger left in me. Would you care to see them—their portraits at least? I have them in my pocket-book."

"I should like, very much," said Miss Robin.

That he was proud of them was not difficult to determine. He was quite nervous in his haste to remove the band of his pocket-book. She had an opportunity of scanning his face yet more closely. The same crisp, curly hair, but grey, the same ingenuous frank face, he had the same gentle leisurely way of speaking.

"Come to the light, Ethel. You will see better," he said moving to the window; "but perhaps your eyes are still good," added he with a smile, "mine have failed me a little."

"I have to use this," confessed Miss Robin, bringing to light a square gold eye-glass, "it was poor mamma's."

"Ah, I have seen that many times," murmured he. "This is my eldest son, Ansell, that was his grandfather's name. This—Horace, after my father and myself. That's the baby—Jack."

"The pet!"

"The last one, but not the least. Now, what do you think of my brood?"

"I think you ought to be proud of them."

"I am proud of them, Ethel—and fond of them. They are good lads. See, this is my house." He held one back, then produced it, "this is their mother, poor soul. She was a good wife, and I was good to her, but in secret, Ethel, in secret, I often caught myself thinking—of you. The day she died, my wife asked me if I had ever cared for any one in England, what could I do but tell her? She told me she had guessed something of the sort, yet you see she had never asked me the question, afraid of stirring up an old sorrow. Ethel, do you think you could take her place. She said if by any chance you were free, the idea did

not clash with her feelings, and my boys, anything their dad does, is right. Ethel, the sight of your dear face, makes me young again."

"Are we not too old, Horace?"

"Not if our hearts are green. Let us imagine the separation has been but ten years; that I have come back to claim you. It will not require a great effort of the imagination," urged he with a smile.

"My life is lonely. There is Polly—Mrs. Lomax—will it be a disappointment to them?" mused Ethel Robin.

"Disappointment?—I see, they have children." He had quick insight. "Ethel, if it is your money, leave it behind you, arrange it as you will, it is not *that* I want, but you. I would stay here, but there are my boys."

"I should not wish you to sacrifice so much. I don't know that such ties should hold me back. Horace what will the world say?"

"What occasion have we to care? We shall be at the other end of it."

"Horace, I did not intend to marry."

"But you kept single for my sake. Lomax was comforted, eh?"

"I should have done him an injustice."

"My darling, fifty-two—fifty. Can we count upon another thirty years? But the days are long over yonder."

The door opened and Nora discovered her brother and Miss Robin, standing much like the figures we see depicted in the old valentines. She had a shrewd suspicion that the pair had become tender over old reminiscences.

"Nora, you did not tell me it was *Ethel Robin*? I was under the impression that it was Polly. Your house would not have held me five minutes had I known the truth."

"That is a poor compliment to me," returned Nora with pretended soreness.

"Nora—Ethel is going back with me," said Horace, placing his arm round his old flame.

"Well," confessed Nora, evincing no surprise, "I was under the impression that you were old sweethearts."

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. F. THEED.

CHAPTER III.

PARTED.

WINTER slowly gave place to spring—spring gradually blossomed forth into summer. There was no sign that half year, as there had been none at any previous time in the intervals between my visits from the Willow Farm; and, though I wondered at odd times how far Phillis' patience had stood her in stead, it would, I think, have been a shock to me, when the time came for my periodical visit, had I not found her in her old place, as I did find her, or rather, as it seemed to me at first, as I found the wreck of her.

I have described her to you as I left her—a handsome, high-hearted, dauntless young woman. Well, she was handsome still; there was no such great physical change in her, but the dauntlessness

and the high-heartedness—it was easy to see that something had killed them in her—that something had taken the spirit out of her. That it was all over, for the present at any rate, between her and her lover I did not need to be told after one look at her face, and I could not bring myself to ask. I had already seen her father, and had gathered from his manner and something he had muttered about the house being plague-stricken, and not knowing why he had let me come to it, that things had gone wrong since I was last there; but I got a clearer idea of the extent of the mischief as I watched their bearing towards each other during the day. It was not that he was more exacting than he used to be, or Phillis less attentive; rather the reverse. She gave him no occasion, it seemed to me, to ask for anything, waiting upon him as quietly and constantly as though to anticipate and attend to his wants were the one business of her life; but it was done with a painful difference in the way of doing it from that happy, familiar fashion I remembered of old; done as a servant might have done it—all the immeasurable distance between a labour of love and a mere duty!

As usual, these two were the prominent figures in the picture; the mistress of the house was as silent and as shadowy as ever, but it struck me that in her manner towards Phillis there was a greater ease, and in Phillis' manner towards her less of that mixture of perplexity and impatience which had been characteristic of them a year before. I should have been glad, for my part, of any outbreak of the old petulance, which would have shown me there was so much life and courage left in the girl. Hers had been too bright, and apparently too strong, a nature to be cowed so easily; to have all the strength and sweetness taken out of it, as it were, at one draught. We were a dull little quartette enough that evening in the Stone Parlour; the two women sat and worked, the mother, as was her wont when her husband was present, never joining in the conversation; the daughter, rarely, and with a visible effort; whilst the farmer talked politics and drank his whisky and water, with but little assistance from me. He took more, I observed, than he used to do—a good deal more—and talked louder, and laid down the law, waxing argumentative as the evening wore on. I felt a slow sort of anger with Phillis taking possession of me, as I sat and looked and listened, and could not help saying to myself that all this change for the worse was due to her. What right had she to abuse so cruelly the power God had given her to brighten and to bless? It was as if the sun were to refuse to shine. And yet I was sorry for her, and would have given almost anything I had to be able to go up to her and say—"My dear, it is all right. Your father has made up his mind to it, and he (there was only one 'he' in the world to her) is coming home for you by the next mail."

For I knew he had gone as well as if she had told me. She did tell me before she said good-bye. I had a right to know, she said, having known what I had, and advised her as I had, when I was last there.

"Not that I took your advice," she added, with a sad little smile. "I had not the patience to wait, you know, nor had he. But we told father

we would live where he liked—do anything he thought best—make any sacrifice—so long as he would let us marry. We said even we would make shift somehow without the money—with what George had. We did not know whether we could get on, but we were ready to try, and thousands of people had begun upon less—had begun upon nothing; but it was no good. As to George, he would not speak to him at all; he would have nothing to say to him. He turned him out, Mr. Francis—as true as you are standing there, he turned him out!”

And this was the girl—standing before me and telling me this—who had told me last year she would and should marry the man she loved, and whose will I had thought was a will of iron! She had seen him turned out of doors, and had accepted her fate, and remained behind him! She answered the question that my eyes, not my lips, put to her.

“Yes,” she said, “I put up with it; I had to put up with it. If father had nothing to say to him, he had plenty to say to me—plenty! I wonder how I ever listened to him, and kept my senses! I wonder I am in my right mind when I think of it, he was so hard and so cruel; and he told me what I can’t tell you—what I can’t tell anybody—what I couldn’t even tell George. And I had promised him I would hold fast; that I would never break my word to him; that I would go with him to the world’s end! Oh, my God! what must he have thought of me? What would you have thought of me? You need not tell me, for I saw it in your face just now. You could not believe your ears after what I had said to you even—and to him! I promised and vowed it to him. I—oh, God forgive me!—God forgive me!”

She broke into the most pitiful tears ever I saw, but it was wonderful how quickly she recovered herself, and apologized to me as politely as though she had been a duchess, for so forgetting herself.

“My poor girl,” I said, “you need not mind me. Only tell me, Phillis, what about George? How did he take it? What understanding did you part with?”

“None,” she replied simply. “I could not make him understand; how could I? He wanted to know too much. He saw I was keeping something back from him, and so I was. When I told him I could not go with him, because, if I went, mother was to go too—because if he could not keep me, father said—and meant—that he could not keep mother either—when I told him that, he said it was so much nonsense to frighten me, and that I ought to know it was; that father was talking like a madman; that he was bound to keep mother, or to maintain her, at any rate. He would not listen to anything I could say to him, and he lost his temper with me, and I lost mine with him; and—it was all over. But I know it was my fault—in a way; only he ought to have trusted me. What do you think? Tell me truly and candidly what you think. I have never had any one to ask; and, oh! if you only knew how I keep asking myself, day and night—day and night!”

It was impossible, I said, for any one to judge, not knowing everything. What the young man had urged was reasonable enough, I thought, with

such light as he had to go by. If there could only have been perfect confidence between them—if she could have trusted him with her secret——”

“It was not mine,” she interrupted me to say. “If it had been mine, it would have been another thing. I had no right to tell him. I could not have done anything but what I did; I know I was right, and yet I cannot rest about it. I keep thinking there may have been something which, if I had only thought of saying it at the time, might have put it all straight between us, so that there might have been something to look forward to. But now there is nothing!”

“Do you mean to say that he went right off—out of the country—without a word?”

“To South America,” she answered, “without a word.”

Somehow, after that, I was not sorry that Merritt came in to tell me the gig was waiting for me. There was nothing I could say to the girl to comfort her in the strait she was in, and it gave me the heartache to see her. There was only One to whom she could turn for consolation in such sore need as that, and I could only pray from my heart that at that Gate she might have grace given her to knock until it should be opened to her.

CHAPTER IV.

A DEADTHED PROMISE.

SHE was one-and-twenty then. For seven years after that, as I knew from her own lips, finding her summer and winter at the same time in the same place, no direct tidings of George Lawrence reached the Willow Farm. For the first two, Phillis did hear indirectly; but then his mother died, and the farm was sold for the benefit of the younger children, so that her only chance of hearing of him was at an end. She got to tell it me as a simple fact, generally without comment, never with any return of the old passionate distress. She had learned to accept it as in time we learn to accept all the great griefs of our lives—if not with the best and truest sort of resignation, with something which stands us in decent stead of it.

At the end of these seven years, making that annual visit of mine in the dark days, I found the house, always so much in the shadow, lying under the darkest shadow of all—the shadow of death.

I was utterly unprepared for it, for at the White Lion at R—I had found the usual answer from Stephen Merritt to the notice I was in the habit of sending him of my approaching “call” at the Farm, and there, as usual too, nobody had heard a word, good, bad, or indifferent, of its inmates.

For the first time in my life I found nobody on the look-out for me when I got there, and I had been kept waiting so long in the cold in the porch for some one to appear in answer to my summons, that I was on the point of thundering—no milder proceedings seeming to avail—at the door, which I had never hitherto found closed against me, when it was slowly and cautiously opened, and the strongly marked features of old Mattie made their appearance.

She started and drew back, as if she had seen my wraith.

“Goodness preserve us, Mr. Francis! and it is

really you! After all the watching and praying, to think you should be in time at last! The ways of the Lord are wonderful indeed, and His mercy—"

"Endureth for ever," I wound up irreverently; "which is more than yours does, my good Mattie, or you would let a poor, starving creature in out of the cold without more ado. But, good heavens! what is the matter, woman?"

She had made way for me to pass her, but in the stronger light in which she now stood I saw with startling distinctness the deathly pallor and distress of her face.

"What is the matter?" she repeated harshly, and how my manner must have jarred upon her I can imagine. "She has never had your name off her lips this last four-and-twenty hours—aye, more—and she is dying."

By the bound my heart gave—by the way in which it seemed to stand still until I had her answer—I knew what a warm place I still kept in it for Phillis Merritt!

"Who is dying?" I gasped—"not Phillis?"

"No—it is not Miss Phillis," she returned curtly "it is the mistress. If you'd dropped a line as you did always use to do, to say you were coming, you'd have saved a deal of pain and suffering, where there was pain and suffering enough already and to spare; but it was too much trouble I s'pose, and you didn't know—for certain, you didn't know!"

Shocked and almost stunned as I was at that I had just heard, and the suddenness of it, I was stung by the unmerited reproach conveyed in these last words.

"You don't know what you are talking about," I exclaimed sharply. "Your master has known these three days that I was coming. I have his letter in my pocket at this moment, saying he should be glad to see me, and would come over and fetch me, only he had to go to Claverton to sell some sheep, and should not be back in time. How long has the mistress been ill? He never wrote me a word of it—I had not a notion!"

"God forgive him!" ejaculated the woman; "but he's a mortal hard man! And she begging and praying like that—for him to know all the time and never to comfort her poor heart by telling her!"

"Do you mean to tell me *nobody* knew I was coming? Not even Miss Phillis?"

"Do you think if *she* had known, she'd have kept it from her mother? She'd have given the clothes off her back to be able to ease her mind—that would she. And here am I stopping jabbering down here, when every minute is worth its weight in gold up there, and I *might* be taking her the comfort. Stay you here, and off with your coat and warm yourself, while I go tell Miss Phillis who it is that is here."

She had not taken me further than the kitchen. The remains of the evening meal were still on the long deal table, and a buxom red-cheeked country girl, one of her subordinates, possibly the only one, came in as she went out and began to clear away. I ascertained from her that Mrs. Merritt had been ailing for some time, but that nothing much had been thought of her illness until within the last fortnight, when she had taken to her bed, and now the doctor said there was no hope. The "young Missus" was worn out, she said, nursing her, but she and Mattie would not let any one else

go near her. The master would not believe she was so bad. He did say at first that it was all make-believe, and that he would not have the meals sent up to her; but the last day or two he had seemed to take it in more, and had not even made any objection to their moving her into the more comfortable room which I had occupied, and where they could have a fire, the girl added, without smothering the house in smoke.

Her revelations were interrupted by the entrance of Phillis. She looked white and worn. How, indeed, could she do otherwise? But there was a positive gladness in her eyes as she raised them to mine.

"If you only knew," she said, "the relief it is to me to see you! I feared you would never be here in time, though I knew you could not fail to be with us before the 15th. And I could not understand why we did not hear. It was so cruel of *him*. I could never have forgiven him if you had been too late. I should always have thought that the hope of seeing you would have kept her alive until you came. You will come up with me at once? It seems inhospitable not to ask you to have something first, but he ought to be at home now—he cannot possibly be long—and I should like you to see her before he comes. He might not let you—one can't tell—and she will not have the same fear on her, anyhow."

So—where I had seen her for the first I saw her for the last time; only we had changed places—it was I who stood by her bedside, not she by mine.

There was scarcely any perceptible change in her. All these years she had been such a shadow of a woman—so colourless and so attenuated—with so little life about her. She could hardly now (save for that strange far-away look that comes into the eyes of the dying), have looked more like death than she had always looked; always, I mean, in my remembrance of her. *But*, I had read welcome—God be thanked for it! many and many a time before in the eyes of those whom I loved and who loved me; but never—no, not even in those which had held for mine all the beauty in the world—had I seen it as I saw it then in those dim orbs of Rachel Merritt's.

It was not until I had spoken to her, and taken in mine the limp white hand which had smoothed my pillow so often in the time which came back to me so vividly as I stood there, I observed that we had been left quite by ourselves. Mattie had been in the room when we entered it, but there had evidently been an understanding between the dying woman and her faithful attendants that we should be left for a brief space alone. It was but little she had to say to me. She had not summoned me, as I had at first thought might be the case, to acquaint me with the secret of her life—for that there was such a secret I could not doubt; but I had not been so far wrong in my further conjecture, that it was in Phillis' interest she wished to see me.

"You are her best friend," she said, speaking painfully; "I might say her only friend; and you know more of her than anybody else. She will listen to you and be guided by you. She may not want help. I don't think he will be bad to her; he has no reason, and he is not unjust. No," she repeated, with a faint insistence, as a slight expression of dissent escaped me. "Not

unjust—hard, very hard. You must not judge of him by his conduct to me. I did him a great wrong. I should like her to make it up to him, if she can, whilst he lives. She says she will if—the other does not come back.”

So far she had spoken clearly and consecutively; but a sort of low wail came into her voice, with the idea, as it seemed, of that possible rupture between father and daughter, and it was in broken sentences, and with difficulty, she went on to say how in the event of any serious reverse of fortune overtaking the latter, she relied upon my assistance, and to tell me how it was to be rendered.

“Listen,” she said; “if he were to turn her out, if she were to quarrel with him or leave him, and find herself out in the world without a home—no one to help her, nowhere to go to—it would be time then for something to be done, and she would not do it herself, she would starve sooner—I know it. Promise me,” raising herself with an immense effort on her pillows, and tightening her grasp of the hand she had never let go, since I gave it her—“promise me, as you hope for mercy yourself when you lie on your dying bed, as I am lying upon mine, you will do it.”

“If I can,” I said; “if I can, before God, I will.”

A smile that was full of peace broke over her dying face.

“I knew it was all right—I knew you would help me,” she murmured; “and it is not a hard thing; it is only to take a letter—I have had it written, written and waiting a long time—and to keep it safe, always about you, almost,” with the faintest, weakest little laugh, “almost like a charm, until—until you know when—”

“Until she is in trouble?” I suggested.

“Until she is starving,” she retorted, with sudden energy; “not until then, never until then.”

“And then—I am to give her?”

“Give it her?” she almost shrieked. “Oh Lord!” and her voice changed to a wail almost of agony, “cannot I make him understand? She is never to see it, never to know—never, never, for all the wide world! You are to take it—you promised before God—you are to take it, and give it with your own hands into his—his! You see the name”—sinking her voice, with a sudden shivering sigh—“it is there—on it.”

She sank back, as she spoke gasping for breath and at that very moment the sound of voices and footsteps, and the sudden sharp closing of a door below, warned me of an impending interruption. I bent over her eagerly and tried to rouse her. “Mrs. Merritt,” I said, “they are coming. Tell me before they come where I am to get the letter. Have you it about you?”

(To be continued.)

AT DAWN.

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.”

A CRIMSON glow
Athwart the boundless dull expanse of grey.
A light upon the dark and lonely way.

“Friend, let me go,
The days have been so dark, so passing drear,
But now in truth the resting-time is near,
For morning breaketh.

“No ties have I,
No children's voices round my dying bed,
Nor wife's soft hand upon my weary head.

So grey the sky
Hath been of late above this busy life,
Yet One hath conquered for me in the strife
Till morning breaketh.

“Why do you weep,
Who erstwhile smiled, the gayest of the gay?
Is it indeed that to my short-lived day

There cometh sleep?
Dear heart! the angel voices beckon far,
And in the distance gleams one clear, bright star
The morning breaketh.

“Clasp close my hand,
For I would have thee with me to the end,
Oh true, most tried and well-beloved friend,
Till in God's land

Of perfect beauty, ever face to face,
I know for aye his gentle, tender, grace,—
When morning breaketh.

“I pray thee gaze
Beyond the casement at the slumb'ring hills,
The mountains lit with glory, and the rills
Soft wrapt in haze.

Mine eyes are dazzled with this wondrous light;
Far 'mid the shadows dieth darkly, night,—
Heav'n's morning breaketh!”

FRANCES HURRELL.

OUR DOGS.

BY ALICE KING.

OUR dogs. We write the words, and as we write a vast company come trooping around us, silky-haired, shaggy-coated, long ears and short tails, short ears and long tails, glossy backs, and backs that are wiry, large full eyes that seem to be starting out to meet us, and merry little eyes that twinkle amid thickets of long, drooping locks; they come from every nook of memory, each claiming, with a pert yap, or a plaintive whine, or an important bow-wow, a place in our chronicle. They are well loved, familiar shapes and faces all, but our narrow canvas will only admit of the entrance of a few upon its confined space, so we have to waive back many of the friendly apparitions in our vision.

Make way first for the hugest pet of all, hugest in size of paw, and limb, and breadth of head, and in the vast share of affection he and his master gave each other mutually; this is the great St. Bernard, Monk. His master's favourite description of him was, “as wise as man, as tender as woman,” and he was equal to it in every respect. When his master was writing a sermon, he would sit staring at him as if he could read every word that found its way onto the paper; yes, and as if he could preach it too; but a smile cast in his direction would cause him to spring up and put his arms round his master's neck, which was a position he dearly loved, and which he would resign to no one, not even to his mistress.

Monk was an eminently sociable dog; he rejoiced in lying stretched by the kitchen fire, with a whole chorus of admiring maid-servants round

him, pausing frequently even from giggling over their latest love passages in the back-yard, or from criticisms on the bonnets in church last Sunday, to stroke his splendid head and ask for his immense paw. He was so strong that not the tallest and biggest man on the premises, or indeed in the parish, was especially anxious to receive his favourite salutation—namely, his two front feet rested on his shoulders; and yet he was so gentle, that he would let Tiny, the little Blenheim, eat out of the same dish with him, and would take peculiar pleasure in picking the hair-pins out of the plaits of any lady he especially affected. When his master left home he would retire to his dressing-room, and make that his hermitage, where he would keep solemn and mournful state until his return. But enough of Monk, big bow-wow though he was; we must not let him fill any more of our space, we must pass on to smaller, but not less attractive favourites.

Dogs are decidedly by nature Conservatives; most of them, with their good will, would never have a single thing changed in their surroundings. Some, however, develop more special and resolute proclivities in this respect, and two of the most Conservative dogs we ever knew were Mimie, the toy terrier, and Gipsy, the King Charles spaniel. They were both dogs of the oldest families and most pure breed, and belonged decidedly to canine aristocracy, from whence, perhaps, arose partly their peculiarities. They could never endure the position of their basin of water being changed, or their cushions being touched; if any one pretended to appropriate their beds they did not growl, or snap, for that they were far too dignified, but they cast such looks of withering scorn upon the offender, that he quickly relinquished his possession of their property, and felt very small indeed.

They were, both of them, though rare beauties and knowing it too, regular dowagers of the ancient *régime* in the state they liked to keep, and the etiquette they would, if possible, exact from all around them. Their ceremonies on retiring to rest were as many as those at the *coucher* of the "Grand Monarque" himself. Here a fold of blanket had to be arranged, there a piece of carpet had to be brought into an especial angle, and if one pin's point was out of place they could take no rest or repose, as their unluckily mistresses, or rather we should say in this case, head servants, knew to their cost.

Both these dogs were highly gifted as to brains, and they used their mental faculties to see that all about them was kept in what they considered good order. If Mimie found no water in the basin belonging generally to all the dogs of the establishment, she would, though she herself was probably not in the least thirsty, begin to set up such a succession of sharp, angry barks, as quickly to cause the deficiency to be remedied. She never liked to see her mistress walking behind the rest of the people who might be with her, she regarded it as a personal indignity, and, coming back to her, would look reprovingly up into her face, and utter little expostulatory whines, until she got her to take her place in advance again. She had an immense and most pronounced dislike to all ridicule, and if any one presumed to laugh at her, she would show the whites of her large, expressive eyes, in a way that made the culprit feel he would rather be three yards than three

inches from her dewy black muzzle, and sharp little teeth, and lips which were being licked suggestively.

It happened once that Mimie and her mistress were spending the night in a little country inn, where the furniture was not of the best and most reliable class. Quite unsuspecting, however, of the real state of things with the bed which they were that night to occupy, lady and dog—Mimie always slept on the counterpane at her mistress's feet—retired to rest and fell asleep. Towards the small hours of the morning there began to be a general collapse with regard to bed and bedstead, and the pair woke to find themselves reposing on the floor. The lady took the mischance mildly and philosophically; but Mimie's wrath knew no bounds, she evidently regarded the whole thing as a practical joke, and her furious barks and indignant growls roused the whole inn with their prolonged vehemence; the sacred majesty of her mistress and herself had, in her opinion, been grievously offended, and she was resolved, however poor-spirited her mistress might be, to express her personal feelings plainly on the subject.

When Mimie was ill she never needed, like other commonplace dogs, to be drenched in order to make her take medicine; she regarded the situation of a dog in a bag, with a stick put through his jaws, with the profoundest contempt and disgust. She knew as well as any one that she wanted physic, so she would trot gravely to one special chair, seat herself upon it with an expression of the most important seriousness in her face, and look first at the medicine bottle and then at her mistress. A spoon being brought, and the appointed dose poured out, she would open her mouth and swallow it with the utmost deliberation and composure; and did any one in the room venture so much as to smile, she would reprove them with a severe glance which spoke volumes concerning her contempt for their folly.

The two dowagers, Gipsy and Mimie, always regarded each other with a hatred and distrust, the expression of which was, fortunately for the peace of the household, in general kept in check by their mutual dread of making themselves ridiculous. If looks, however, could kill, there would have been deadly slaughter done by the eyes with which they watched one another as they lay on their respective cushions. We have hitherto spoken of them both in the past tense. But though Mimie has passed away full of years and of honours, Gipsy still remains, having triumphantly survived her rival.

Gipsy still holds the position of dowager-dog with much state and grandeur. She queens it over all the other dogs that live in the house or approach it. The Blenheim, Tiny, about whom more by-and-by, is her most humble servant; her great delight is to spring upon a cushion on which he is lying, and use him as a sort of arm-chair, lounging luxuriously with her back resting against his soft, silky side. She loves nothing so much as a drive. When the carriage is ordered, a fact of which she is always as well aware as the coachman himself, she takes her place with much solemnity of aspect upon a particular seat, and there her face, with its turned-up nose and sweeping ears, goes through a whole tragedy of expression, till she finds out whether her mistress is or is not going to take her with her. She regards one of the servants

in the house as her special attendant, who is bound to do her smallest behest, and when she wants her, she has a peculiar call for her which is just like the ringing of a bell. But we must now leave our Conservative dowagers to turn to doggies of other types.

Tiny, the Blenheim, is the most complete specimen of a courteous gentleman that ever appeared in canine mould. He is like nothing so much as a little French count of most ancient lineage, as, with his curly coat and fastidiously turned-up muzzle and well-feathered paws, he steps daintily along, treading as if he wished to be careful of the carpet as he went. He gives up the best of everything to Madam Gipsy with the most chivalrous politeness, and will never touch the plate till she has taken the first morsel from it. He asks no one's leave to go out or in, but is seen taking constitutional gravely by himself, walking round the gravel paths in apparent serious meditation. He is very dainty and particular about his food, and if such a thing as a saucer of skim milk is offered him he turns away with unutterable scorn quivering in every muscle of his nose.

There are some dogs which are born playthings and babies, and remain so to the end of their lives, seeming never to reach years of maturity. Chica, the black and tan terrier who took Mimie's place, is a remarkable proof of this fact. She loves nothing so much as lying on her back, flinging her delicately tanned paws into the air, and pretending to bite her mistress's fingers, though this latter proceeding is as regular a piece of make-believe as a boy firing at wooden soldiers. She rejoices in playing a game of ball, or tearing in fragments a newspaper, in both of which sports she displays a flexible, kitten-like grace. She has not the faintest notion of worrying anything, no, not even a pussy cat, but will pass the most warlike tabby with only an innocent, inquiring glance up into her face.

Chica, whose name, let it be mentioned here in parenthesis, means a baby girl in Spanish, was brought up from early puphood with a brother called Bimbo, the Italian for a baby boy. The two were the exact image of each other, a real canine Sebastian and Viola, and were inseparable till Bimbo was sold to a master who took him with him to India. Whenever she is held up before a mirror, and sees there confronting her a little dog, who, mole for mole, and tan spot for tan spot, is the precise counterpart of herself, Chica evidently thinks that this is her brother Bimbo brought thither from India by some magic agency to visit her. Her mistress calls "Bimbo, Bimbo," to flatter her pretty illusion, and she wags her whipcord tail, and pricks her velvet ears, and gives several little barks and whines of pleased recognition.

Yet with all her baby-like simplicity, Chica has no lack of mind; her little face is full of intelligence, and she is one of the most winsome, fascinating creatures in the world. Her doggie heart is in the right place, as is proved by the love she bears her mistress, and by the regular hysterics of joy into which she goes on welcoming her return after even a short absence. Indeed of all sorts and breeds of dogs, great and small, we know none to equal, on the whole, as a friend and companion for either man or woman, a black and tan toy terrier that is well, but not too finely, bred;

the smallest toy terrier are too like rats, and have their wits too much squeezed out of them in the effort to make their heads small enough to fit into an egg-cup.

We could continue our dog chronicle for many and many a page, until, indeed, this short paper became a volume of a very respectable size; but here we must cease, wishing all true dog lovers as many true, faithful canine friends as we ourselves have enjoyed.

IN THE NIGHT.

THE night is haunted; on the far-off moors
The ghostly snow is lying deep and still,
The spectral moonlight, like a shape of ill,
Glides o'er the chasm where the hoarse surf roars,
And through the troubled darkness slowly soars
To crown the beacon on the sea-girt hill,
And all the wild-wave voices, low or shrill,
Break into sound that threatens and implores.
Oh, weary traveller! whose household fire
Is dull as life's faint pulse, we dream of thee,
And of sad souls shut out from life's desire
By fate's vast solitudes of land and sea.
The mournful echoes bring us only nigher
To the great heart-throbs of Humanity.

E. M. THOMPSON.

OFFICIOUSNESS.

LORD MALMESBURY tells us that when he was first appointed Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston walked over to the office to give him a few hints as to the conduct of business. Amongst them this was one: "When the diplomat calls, do not be too reserved, but preface your observations by stating that what you say is *officious*." And Lord Malmesbury explains that in departmental language *officious* is opposed to *official*. In communications of the latter character the Secretary speaks as a member of the Government; in those of the former, in his own person. The second adjective represents *grande tenue*; the first, a shooting-coat and cigarettes.

Here we have the survival of a word in its original meaning, because it has been shielded from the effects of use and time in the safe, silent chambers of diplomacy. Out in the street the expression has got *sweated* (if we may so say) into a disfigured meaning. *Officious* now is equivalent to fussy, meddlesome: in the reign of James I. it was a synonym for obliging. Bacon, in his essay "Of Deformity," says that kings "put great trust in eunuchs, because they that are envious toward all, are more *officious* towards one." And later on, Milton speaks of the "bright *officious* lamps" of heaven.

When we use such an expression in the present day as securing a person's good *offices*, we revert to the elder interpretation. If a philologist could penetrate into the doleful and dusty corners of the public departments, it is likely enough he would find other fossil words lying about unregarded. He would, however, run the chance of being snubbed for officiousness in the most modern sense of that noun.

PAUL BENISON.

THE BRIDGE.

TO and fro
They come and go,
Men and women and children—so:
Dark or light,
Or day or night,
Over the bridge to left and right.

Old and gray,
This bridge to-day
Secrets manifold might betray—
Things, I trow,
None else can know,
Saving the river there below!

Stories won
At set of sun—
Gathered from those whose work was done;
Seamstress pale,
And shop-girl frail—
Story on story, tale on tale!

Weary skies
For weary eyes,
Weary spirits, and women's sighs:
Oh the tears!
And oh the fears!
Crossing the bridge thro' all these years!

Bright-eyed girls,
The household's pearls,
Wishing they were the wives of earls;
Lads from towns
On country downs,
Starting in life on bright half-crowns!

Students sure
Of failures, your
Nobles and beggars, rich and poor;
Maids and men,
And mothers then,
Crossing the bridge again, again.

Weak and strong,
For right or wrong,
Living a life that's short or long;
Match-boys small,
And flower-girls tall,
Sinners and saints, and one and all!

Day or night,
Or dark or light,
Drunken and sober, stained and white:
Some who fell—
O Bridge, don't tell!—
Long, long ago, to shame and hell!

Thus they go,
And to and fro
Pass and repass, and ever so;
Dark or light,
Or day or night,
Over the bridge to left and right!

WILLIAM TWANLEY.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS OF HARTLE:
A STORY IN THREE PARTS.

BY CHARLES KRUGER.

PART I.

HARTLE is a quaint and drowsy little village in Western England. Though it has little, if any, history of its own, its antiquity is undoubted; for it has one or two very aged buildings, and many cottages with the old-fashioned square windows and low-thatched roofs and winding stairs. The church, too, is old and covered with ivy and moss and lichen, and the tablets in its yard speak of its age and the past longevity of some of the inhabitants. The ground around the church is still used for burials, for Hartle parish is not a very populous one; and, besides, a Dissenting body have lately opened a ground of their own. This old church, which is built of stone and in a fragmental manner, as though funds had been waited for, stands in the centre of the village, and right in the middle of its own grounds, which are fringed by a circle of trees—elm, beech, and poplar; these trees stand as though guarding the old building, and give it an appearance of shaded cosiness which its architecture has failed to impart.

But we must speak of Hartle matters which occurred some years ago. A few hundred yards away from the village itself, and down the road which led to the south, stood the Hartle parochial schools; and there was a certain fame attached to them, for it was a seldom disputed fact that this educational establishment was really the best of its kind, not only in that parish, but in the district also. The school-building was of red brick, with many corners and a turreted roof. It was divided into three separate and distinct departments—one for boys, another for girls, and the third infants. And at the hours of assembling and dismissing the road to the village was always crowded with the pupils of these schools. This itself was proof of the flourishing popularity of this abode of learning, and a few words will explain how this measure of success had been brought about.

Ten years before, a narrow and mean-looking stone building standing on this same road bore an untidy board over its doorway, whereon was dimly inscribed, "Parochial School." There was a change at the vicarage just about that time, and the new eyes were quick to see deficiencies; the school accommodation was short, and the vicar knew well that if the church did not quickly meet the demand some one else would, so he set about it at once. He organized special services and concerts and bazaars, and appealed to the benevolent opulent. The result was not bad for Hartle; another building similar to the narrow and mean one was requisitioned, and Mr. Holt, the new vicar, imported a schoolmistress to the village. So the accommodation was at once increased twofold; one schoolroom was devoted to boys alone, the other to girls and infants. The new school teacher was a Mrs. Crewe. Of course, soon after she became located at Hartle, rumour was busy about her, otherwise the village would have omitted a very usual proceeding; but rumour said nothing discreditable of the lady; it

merely believed that Mrs. Crewe was an old acquaintance of the new vicar, that she had just come from the parish where he had recently worked, that she was a widow, and that she had one child—a bright-faced and intelligent girl of ten. Unquestionably Hartle was educationally improved by the coming of the new teacher; under her care the youthful minds became quite brisk, and teemed with learning as the youngsters in this village had never done before. Old Bygate, who for forty years had been the chief local pedagogue, and had not changed with the times, stood in great danger of losing his laurels; and as for the two old maids—the Misses Dewdney—who taught a select number at sixpence a head weekly, at their own cottage, and made really audacious guesses at the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, and worked their arithmetical problems by strange rules, these ladies gradually lost their scholars (their dupes one might say), and in time, having no pupils, had to give up their pretence of teaching, and were left with nothing but their own dignity and a small legacy.

Therefore Mrs. Crewe speedily gained a worthy name in Hartle, and brought success upon her department of the parochial schools. But the Rev. Mr. Holt still laboured and roused his parishioners to help him, and in time the present attractive and commodious building was erected; and old Bygate followed the way of all flesh and was buried in the old churchyard, and a dark-complexioned and ambitious young man took his place, and astounded parents and children merely by showing them what elementary education ought to be. And as the new buildings were in three departments, another teacher was necessary for the third; and Miss Ellen Crewe, having by this time grown into an interesting young lady, she was appointed tutor for the infants, and so directed the growing villagers through their first stage of learning.

This brings us up to the time of our story, and to a warm night in autumn. The red glow in the west was fast dying out; lights from oil-lamps and from candles were beginning to shine through windows and upon the roadway; and the labourers were coming from their distant work to the rest of their cottage homes.

Mrs. Crewe's cottage was on the same road as the schools, but farther away from the village. It was half hidden from the eyes that travelled past it, for it stood behind a high and thick-grown hedge, and a little wicket-gate led to it. It had one storey only, which showed a peculiarity in the planning, for it was not a very small house—five large rooms, and a flower-garden ranged at the sides and the front, and there was a large kitchen-garden at the back. The cottage was a careful bit of building, and its roof, which lay almost flat, projected far over the walls on every side, and looked as though it were intended to be more than an ordinary house covering. There were plenty of trees and shrubs round about. Altogether Mrs. Crewe's home was a really comfortable looking place. From the little gate which opened from the roadway one path led to the door in front, another to the door at the back of the house. The first was rarely used; even the vicar, who was the most important visitor, had found the way to the door which faced the long garden and the fields beyond.

John Drake, a thriving farmer, knocked at this familiar door on this autumn night. He was not a nervous nor a shy man, and hit the panels with his stick as though he intended to be heard, and was confident about his reception. Ellen opened the door, and John Drake entered and walked into the room on the right: a nicely-furnished apartment, with a bright fire in the little grate, and a tea-table which had just a minute before been in use.

"Have you had tea, Mr. Drake?" Miss Ellen asked.

Mr. Drake had not; and to show he was wishful of appearing to be quite at home, he pulled a chair towards the table and laughed cheerily at what he called his "no small cheek." But John was a sensible man, and would not have half-met an invitation without knowing that he was a welcome guest. Dorothy, the brown-skinned servant girl, soon replenished the table and brought the farmer his cup.

"Where is mamma?" said Drake to Miss Crewe.

"Busy."

John grunted, as though he resented an abundance of work to prevail when he called. However, it did not seem to spoil his appetite. Ellen took up some work and sat down, ready to chat with the visitor. When he had done his eating, he stretched out his big limbs and long back much to the jeopardy of the chair joints. Farmer Drake was a man who lived well and happily, his easy manner and fresh and smiling face told that story. He wore a suit of good grey cloth; altogether he was dressed with more care than when he rode past the house earlier in the day. John's eyes gave good attention to the doorway, and he was expectant when any footstep sounded in the other rooms. Soon Mrs. Crewe entered and smiled a welcome, and the farmer looked more good-natured than ever. Ellen, in a few minutes, went out to pay a visit, and John Drake and the schoolmistress sat in the room together.

Drake now became restless and made such heavy shifts and rolls upon the fragile chair that the joints creaked loudly. Then he hitched his seat a foot nearer to Mrs. Crewe, and looked reflective and hesitating. When he spoke it was with a blurt.

"I suppose you know why I call here—what motive I have, Mrs. Crewe—or Jane, I may say?"

The teacher looked up with a short startled expression, and then bent her head again over the work which was employing her hands; but she didn't speak directly.

"I come to see you, Jane; of course, its only natural that I should." He smiled as though his thoughts had found happy expression.

"To see me—" Mrs. Crewe spoke lowly, and having got so far, coughed as if her throat had some impediment.

"Yes, to see you"—a pause—"you didn't expect I was calling to see Ellen. Eh? Now come," Drake continued, after trying to laugh away the restraint which had stolen over both; "its courting I've meant every time I have come under this roof for the past few months. I'm trying my best to get you for a wife. I've been a w.dower these ten years, and I have no children living; you've been a widow some time I know. Now Jane, I ask you plainly and

honestly"—and the chair got another forward lift—"will you make a happy man of me?"

Mrs. Crewe might have answered that she would try, but she said instead: "This is very sudden, Mr. Drake."

"Ah, I made a lot of preparation, by calls, and attentions, and all that."

"I have scarcely ever thought of marrying again."

"Then think now, my dear."

"It's a very serious question."

"It is!" assented John. Then each waited for the other to speak.

"There's nothing against me, I hope," said Drake.

"Oh no," she quickly answered, and for a moment looked straight into his eyes, "I believe you to be a worthy man, Mr. Drake."

"Worthy! I know I'd be worth more if I had you." Mrs. Crewe smiled, and the wooer gained courage. Said he (with a merry twinkle in his eye)—"I bear a good character, I'm not a poor man, and my habits are respectable. Jane, come now, won't you take me off the market?"

But Jane was either undecided or she did not wish to give a quick answer. She sat blushing, silent and thoughtful. Apparently the proposal had not surprised her very much. Quite by accident her eyes, as they wandered from the glowing fire, alighted and rested for a moment upon a portrait which hung in a frame over the mantel-shelf. It was a portrait of cabinet size and showed the bust of a man; a fellow with a long and narrow and sharp-looking face, from which a long but thin beard extended. It was an intelligent face enough; much of its expression, however, was hidden by the hair, which was allowed to grow unchecked. When Mrs. Crewe took her glance from this picture and turned to John Drake, her look brightened, as though the change was a pleasant one.

"Well, what are you going to do with me?" asked the farmer. He had been anxiously looking for some sign.

"What a hurry you are in. Give me time to think—will you?"

"Well I must, if you wish it. How long?"

Jane looked as though she would prefer not to make a definite statement on that point.

"Twenty-four hours is a long time—to wait," argued John. "But of course I must have patience. Let me call at this time to-morrow. Eh? You can turn it over in your mind during school hours."

"Then I wouldn't be turning the children's heads in the right direction."

"Set them on with the multiplication table."

"My department has got beyond that. Besides I am not training parrots."

"Well, may I call to-morrow?" said John, very earnestly; as he hitched his chair closer still, and gently took her hand.

"I think you may."

Now these last words had just been whispered when the creak of the wicket gate as it turned upon its hinges was heard by those inside the house, and as this was regarded as proof of the approach of Ellen or some visitor, the farmer's chair was put near its first position and the conversation quickly became commonplace.

It was Ellen who had moved the gate, and as she had come down the road, she had seen that a man hobbled on before her, and that when he was

opposite her home he stopped and looked around. When he saw the girl turn towards the gate, he spoke.

"Does the school-mistress live here—can you tell me?"

"Yes. I teach in one school; my mother is the mistress."

"I thought this was the house, a little girl told me the first one on the left." The man spoke affably, though with an effort, for he was both weak and weary. A fit of coughing seized upon him, a racking and hollow cough, and he leaned heavily upon his thick walking-stick—like one who was in great need of support.

"Is it some business of the schools?" Ellen asked.

"Yes; I would like to have the use of one of the rooms for an hour after school hours some day this week. I am an entertainer, and give performances for children; it is a thoroughly instructive and amusing entertainment, free from anything objectionable of course, and I have given it with great satisfaction in almost every town and village in—"

"You had better see the vicar," Ellen said, interrupting, for she thought the man's volubility was being wasted. "He has power over the school in such cases; my mother could not really do anything in the matter."

"Would you look at one of my circulars?"

"Oh never mind, thank you. I can only recommend you to call upon the vicar."

The man sighed heavily. "Is it far to the vicar's place?" he asked, as he turned wearily and moved his feet as though they pained him.

"Quite the other end of the village."

The entertainer murmured thanks and slowly started, then stopped. "What is your clergyman's name, please; I may decide to write to him?"

"The Reverend Mr. Holt."

"Holt!—A. G. Holt?" asked the man.

"Yes."

The gloaming had passed before this, but on this night there was an early moon, and Hartle and the country all around already lay in a pure white light. So when the man had turned, Ellen could see his features pretty plainly. However, he was only a shabby-genteel tramp (in the eyes of Miss Ellen, who had some pride), and she took little notice of his face until, at the mention of the vicar's name, she saw that this person gave a peculiar contraction of the eyebrows, which denoted surprise and thought, and the peculiar expression which resulted seemed familiar to the girl. Then the whole face of the man, palely illumed as it was by the moonlight, reminded Ellen Crewe of some other face that she had seen, but where or when she could not at that moment remember.

The entertainer was a fellow with a long and narrow and sharp-looking face, from which a long but thin beard extended. It was an intelligent face enough; much of its expression, however, was hidden by the hair, which was allowed to grow unchecked.

He walked slowly and lamely away towards the village, without saying another word; and Ellen, after watching him for a moment, closed the gate, and went indoors.

Mr. John Drake soon after took his departure,

and went, singing light-heartedly, back to his farm. It is good to have some hobby in life; and just then Mr. John's hobby was a very pleasant one, being Mrs. Crewe; and the comfortable farmer was happy, and had great expectations of happiness in the future.

Mrs. Crewe was more than usually radiant, too, on that bright night, and she smiled as she saw her joyful face reflected in the mirror which stood on the mantel-shelf of the little sitting-room. Time had not hurt the softness of her skin, and her eyes still shone bright, and her hair was black as it had ever been.

"One may still be young at forty-two," Jane Crewe thought, as she sat in a reverie; "even after such heavy trouble as mine has been, and ten years——"

She suddenly bethought her that these reflections were bordering upon a painful subject—upon something which she had often and often wished could be erased from her memory for evermore. As she rose from her seat, and was about to leave the room, her eyes met the portrait on the wall again; she looked at it sadly, and said half-aloud—

"You remind me only of the sorrow I have borne. I had better take you down soon." And with that she went to her work in another room, and to happier thoughts.

Some few minutes latter Ellen Crewe sat down in this little sitting-room with the intention of forthwith writing a letter to an absent friend; she sat with her left side fronting the fire, and now and then looked into the blaze, as though it were likely to furnish inspiration or suggest ideas, for Hartle was seldom rich in news worth recording. When she was tired with gazing fruitlessly at the fire, she gazed at the wall or at the pictures in front, and then paid a like attention to the sides, for it was quite a chatterbox of a letter—very, very long.

But directly her eyes fell upon the portrait of the thin, bearded man, she threw down her pen and rose from the table.

"That's where I have seen the face! Of course. How forgetful!"

Ellen felt quite warm with sudden excitement, and, feminine-like, looked in the mirror to see if she appeared with any unusual glow. Even the mirror had a revelation for her, and increased the excitement.

"The peculiar expression about the eyes and brow at times is what I have often noticed in myself!" exclaimed Ellen. And, like the impulsive girl she was, she stayed not for further thought, but left the house, and, despite all her pride, ran down the road to the village, bare-headed, and as fast as her legs would carry her.

In a quarter of an hour she returned, walking slowly, and was wondering why she had run through the village, searching for the man who had called himself an "entertainer," and what she would have said or done if she had found him.

Though Miss Ellen was unusually thoughtful during the remainder of that night, she did not speak a word to her mother on the subject of her musings.

But on the next day, when the scholastic duties were over, and mother and daughter sat at tea, Ellen broke a long and thoughtful silence.

"Mother dear, how old was I when father died?"

Mrs. Crewe looked across the table, rather startled, for the question was not unrelated to her thoughts just then; but it was only momentary, and the customary peaceful calm came back to her face again.

"You were ten years old at the time, Ellen."

"I remember you told me that he died away from home, and that his death was sudden. What was the cause?"

There was something, which seemed like the remembrance of a trouble, flitted across Mrs. Crewe when she heard this question.

"He was shot in a saloon in California."

"In a drinking-saloon?"

"Yes."

The shadow had gone; Jane Crewe seemed to have conquered it, as though its coming was a weakness, which should rightly be overcome.

"Why was my father in California? You and I were not there, were we?" Ellen put this question nervously.

"No; we were never there."

"And my father?"

"Was working there—I—he had business in that country."

"Now, mother, there is one thing which I never could understand. I remember that it was Christmas time, and I was on a visit to dear old grandma, and that dreadful news came from you, and it was about my father, I know. But I was old enough to see that they avoided speaking of the trouble in my hearing, or, at any rate, in such words that I could glean what was really the matter. It was deep trouble to you, for every one at grandma's began to talk of you as 'poor Jane;' and my father was some way concerned in it. I heard his name mentioned often, and not pleasantly either. I had gone for a week, but I remember I stayed two months; then, when I returned to you, our home had been shifted to another town, and you and I were alone, for father was away. I can recollect you weeping, and telling me that my father was dead, and I should never see him again; and the black clothes—I remember wearing mourning for a long time. Then, soon after the fearful news from California, we came here, and have lived in Hartle ever since. Now, mother dear, I know there is something about my father that I have never been told—something about his going away."

Ellen had laid this case so methodically before her mother, and had spoken so unflinchingly, if rather nervously, that there is little doubt the matter had been mentally rehearsed by the girl before she had spoken.

There was an anxious time of silence, the mother looking away from her daughter; the girl scarcely daring to meet the eyes of the other, through fear of seeing tears springing from them.

Mrs. Crewe felt that it was necessary for her to say something in answer to her daughter's half-questions; so, without bringing her face to the view of Ellen, she said—

"It is not a pleasant subject, my dear; nor is it necessary or beneficial that you should know more of it than you do already."

"Is there something that you do not wish me to know?"

"My dear Ellen, you are only distressing me; and whatever I might tell you it would do no good."

This was kindly spoken, and was still emphatic enough for an obedient daughter. But Ellen was very unsatisfied; not only through curiosity and a natural interest in her scarcely remembered progenitor, but because she dearly loved her mother, and was anxious for her happiness; and also for another reason—Miss Ellen was proud and ambitious. She tried very hard to read her mother's face, hoping to get a hint of the mystery which was not to be told her; but Mrs. Crewe's position did not admit of this. The girl's fear was partly selfish, for above all else was her dread that their name had been attainted by some bad action of her father; she reasoned quickly and concluded that crime, probably some abhorrent crime, must cause this mystery. There were many things to favour this idea, such as the secrecy used many years ago while the events were still fresh, and whilst she visited her grandmother; then there was the change in their abode, and consequent removal from all old surroundings and acquaintances—and of the latter only one was now known to them, their old friend the Reverend Mr. Holt.

"If there is anything in the past that if known would bring our name into disgrace," thought Ellen, as she sat in great nervousness, "and by some strange and unexpected means it were to become known, it would spoil my prospects and be a great trouble to my mother; and I should never forgive the man who caused it"—she gave a furtive glance at the portrait on the wall—"but oh! I would hate him."

Very soon, Ellen quickly turned to her mother, as though possessed of a new idea.

"Mother dear, I think there will be no harm in asking this question; but was my father a clever man? I often look at his portrait and think that he must have been clever." (Ellen spoke this fib without blushing.)

"Clever! In what way?"

"In music, or in speaking, or in amusements, such as conjuring or—"

"You are right, Ellen, he was a good musician, and could be very entertaining, for he knew many amusing tricks and was clever at chemistry."

Ellen Crewe heard, and bent her head that her mother might not see the crimson face, then slowly and silently rose and went out into the cool air.

The girl walked like one in a stupor, down the path by the side of the house to the little white gate at the front. She opened this and looked down the road towards the village, and then the other way. It would have been rather hard for her to analyze the motive that suggested these acts of hers, but she felt that she was in great dread of some one coming, and she fervently hoped they would not come, and even hoped they did not live and so *could* not come.

"What a dreadful idea this is!" she moaned in a low voice and clasped her hands in petulant anxiety. "It may be only a series of coincidence—but it is very, very strange!"

She pressed her head with her joined hands as if she wished to deaden some troubling thought, and then almost cried outright through vexation and fear. When she looked towards the village again she saw John Drake coming down the road, and that brought a new terror to the girl.

"If this happens what will he say? And what

a disappointment to poor mother, and to all of us."

She did not wish to meet a friend like Mr. Drake in her present state of visible agitation, so after her first sight of him she went indoors and to her room, and cooled her hot brow and brushed her disarranged hair.

It had often been said of John Drake that he had "a large heart;" certainly it was contained in a big body; and when the farmer reached the gate where Ellen had been standing, his heart (to his thinking) was thumping beneath the broad breast with more violence than hearts generally use. His face was, on the whole, joyous, but perhaps there was just a shade of anxiety about it. He made bold entry into the cottage, and his cheery salutation had a brightening effect upon the mistress of the house. Ellen, who was old enough to understand, and in fact was not without experience in such matters, took care not to make a third party in the room for any length of time, so John had a clear course and was left to make another decisive step in his wooing of Mrs. Crewe. Although he did not hurry matters, for the widow's smiling face seemed to tell him that he was pretty secure, his visit was only an hour long by the time that he was standing in all the dignity of his six-feet height and was holding Jane Crewe in his arms, whilst her head rested, as though for protection, on his breast.

"I'm the happiest man in Hartle this minute," he said.

And Jane really looked as if she was the happiest woman, and probably she was.

"Mind, we are not children," John gently explained, "and needn't wait either for more sense, which we're not likely to get; nor for more money, which we don't greatly want. So the sooner the bells are set a-ringing for us, the sweeter they'll sound. That is, if you're the same way of thinking, my dear."

Jane made reply merely by opening her dark eyes a little wider, which denoted a very mild reproof of such haste, and only added a charm to the radiance of her smiles.

"Bless you!" said John very emphatically (he had an arm round the lady's waist), "I think I'd kill the man who tried to take you from me."

"Oh! John."

What an advantage it must be to be a big and powerful man, over the average in size, and then one can dispense with the tedious process of arguing, and be valiant without a tremble and without appearing to make idle boasts! If Mr. Drake had been six inches shorter and six stone lighter his anticipation of a rival's fate could have been safely answered with a laugh; as it was, it seemed quite to be expected that this giant would naturally damage a rival, perhaps because his great strength would not be confined when the issue was not a doubtful one and the provocation was so great.

However, no rival appeared, nor was expected, so John Drake peacefully went towards his farm when his long visit that night was over; and he whistled gaily and thought it was a very delightful world, this one of ours, and that his future wife and himself must really be the two happiest people in it.

(To be continued.)

A SPRING OFFER.

BY E. BETHUNE HORSBRUGH.

"NICE little thing in grey that! She's been running it pretty close with you. Tollemache, do you mean anything this time?"

Tollemache plumed his moustache—that is, ran a couple of fingers under it. Napier was his chosen friend, and could make such observations with impunity.

The latter continued:

"She's not the heiress, you know. I've overheard that; I hadn't the opportunity to tell you before. It's her cousin—the one in pink—plain as a pikestaff. My dear fellow, don't make a fool of yourself! Give the girl her *congé* gently, and go over to the other."

Both men started suddenly.

"I say, did you hear that? It wasn't like a human being. Why, it's that little beggar of a pup sneezing!" And pulling aside the curtain, Napier discovered the little animal, which he immediately commenced to tease. A moment afterwards a young girl, dressed in grey, entered.

Tollemache immediately advanced to meet her.

"And so," he presently observed, as he sat down beside her, "I really am the first 'society man' you have ever met?"—quoting her words of yesterday.

"Fancy your remembering that!" she smiled brightly. "Yes, of course. Why, I was shut up so, because—well, 'necessity knows no law,'" she added very gravely. "Did you never wish you were rich?—but of course you *are* rich?"

The sweet, half-pouting lips were raised interrogatively, and her eyes—a sparkling blue—met his without the least constraint.

For a moment the man thus questioned considered. He had passed many pleasant hours with this girl. She was more than pretty—she was very taking. She spoke as she thought, and her thoughts seemed always fresh and striking—striking in the sense that they elicited responses from him, which, he was aware, were better than he had ever before given in exchange for women's conversation. She made him feel, too, that he had not taken sufficiently into account that this visit of hers to town was her first introduction into society, and that she accepted his manner, his bearing, towards her veritably and truly, and for far more than their worth. How astonished she had been to hear him say that So-and-so and So-and-so were not engaged—they were merely passing the time.

"Then *we* are merely passing the time, I suppose?" she had observed, and to this he had demurred a little; he said she drew her conclusions too quickly.

"I am rich," he replied at length, "for a bachelor; but for a married man, *no*."

"Oh, then, you are considering about marrying?"

The question was direct enough, and so was his reply, which was merely one of those straight, embarrassing glances he had on other occasions found tell remarkably well on some women. Strange that this little country girl could meet it unblushingly, unconstrainedly! She was rather free, for all her simplicity. But had he not better

let matters drift before ~~he~~ thought too much about him?

"Shall I say that you are making me consider it?"

"I don't quite know," blushing transiently, yet still, apparently, with no self-consciousness, "what you mean?"

"I mean," he murmured, "that I think you like me, you *know* that I like you. You are very young; it would not be fair to bind you; but, this mutual interest, shall I say, in each other, shall we—will you let it continue whilst you stay here? Afterwards, well never mind about afterwards now, I only entreat for the continuance of a pleasant understanding between us."

The girl looked away and did not immediately respond; she did not notice either the waiting glance on Tollemache's handsome face and the triumphant expression it wore.

"What can you see in me, Mr. Tollemache? If I were like my cousin now, so clever, so amiable, and besides, I daresay you have heard how that she is an heiress?"

"Yes," he said, catching a glimpse of the pink dress on the balcony and Napier's form beside it, "pity this little grey girl hasn't got it. Let us go back to where we were," lightly touching the hand which was close beside him, and smiling as he saw how at last her colour vividly rose and how confused she appeared as her cousin now approached them. Bending low across to her he murmured softly, "*Remember you belong to me till—*"

"Till I go," she replied equally softly, "but after?" she added quickly.

"Ah, after!" And he thought to himself "poor girl, how her lip, her whole face quivered."

"And so, to-morrow, you go back to Willow Marsh? We have had some pleasant times together."

"Until to-morrow I promised this understanding should continue, but as you are a true and honourable man—Oh, Mr. Tollemache, I do not want to seem 'bold' to you, but—" and here she suddenly buried her face in her hands.

"I cannot propose to you," he returned frowning, and not without a sense of considerable uncomfortableness; he had thought her so quiet, so self-contained, and yet so ingenuous and refreshing that he had not expected a *denouement* like this, and he felt that he had been incautious, to say the least of it. He must get himself out of this fix somehow, the sooner and the more decidedly the better. "Besides, do you remember telling me that you wondered I did not prefer your cousin? and you mentioned all her many and charming qualities. I was struck by your remark, though I took no notice of it at the time, and in fact, I may as well tell you at once, I have proposed to her. She gives me her answer to-morrow."

"I—I can say no more, I—" she rose abruptly, terribly embarrassed, terribly shame-faced, and with a desperate rush, she passed him, darted through the door and fled like a bird up the staircase.

"I say, Tollemache, 'come out,' there's a good fellow and have a smoke. Come away from that pink everlasting. Now we're out of earshot I can tell you she's no longer the pink of perfection—I

found it out—got it from the lady's maid. There's been some devilry somehow. Stick to that nice little girl, *she's* the heiress after all, and not so simple as she looks. By Jove, Tollemache, you don't mean to say you've committed yourself with the 'pink un.'"

"I don't mean to say anything. Leave me."

"Tollemache, you're a fool."

There *was* no doubt he was in a fix. But a little reflection soon showed him that it would not be difficult to make matters smooth between himself and the real heiress.

(*In the Park, by the Fountains, 11.45 a.m.*)

"You expected my cousin. I begged of her to let me come instead. I—I—that is—" and the girl seemed utterly at a loss how to proceed.

"Janet," he exclaimed, "if you knew how I repent, how I have struggled in vain to keep back the love, the interest, the attraction, you possess for me. Away from you, pacing up and down my room last night, I saw what a fool I had been, what happiness I had so nearly missed—for oh, Janet! you will overlook my words of yesterday"—he paused. "My income of £600 per annum *shall* do for both of us. Janet, say you will be my wife, my own true love."

"If it had not been for the lady's maid and the little pug dog, I might have said, who knows," dropping him a mocking curtsy, "I will."

Had he heard aright? Amazed, confused, enraged, he learnt it all as she continued, "didn't Mr. Napier see our lady's maid? and didn't the pug dog sneeze"—here she made a ridiculous imitation—"and it had a little cold, it had," mimicking his friend. "Ah, the nice little thing in grey! You see I heard it all—I was out on the balcony—I have learnt my lesson in life—society life—quickly, have I not, Mr. Tollemache? Do you really think I am as simple as I look? *Now*, by-the-by," pulling out her watch, "it is close upon 12 A.M., and I had nearly forgotten the 'wind-up' of it all. *This is the first of April*, and after 12 the fun ceases; so 'old wives' say. I wish you a very good-morning, Mr. Tollemache."

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT.

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

CHAPTER VI.

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS.

THE next night and the next night again the storm raged with increased violence. On the second of these two nights no one on the vessel slept, but on the afternoon of the day following there was a lull in the wind, and a break in the clouds, through which the sun appeared shining dimly on a watery world, as if to see what ruin had been wrought in its absence.

Such of the passengers as were able to leave their berths went on deck, that they might make the most of the little brightness, and cheer themselves with the prospect of finer weather.

Kate was among these; her pretty colour had fled with her charming vivacity, and an ex-

pression of impatient disgust was on her features.

"What a passage!" she said, shrugging her shoulders as she looked at the wave-masses rising and falling under the chilly light. "Did any one ever have a worse?"

"It hasn't lasted all the time, you know," Jack said, apologetically. "We had some good weather at the beginning."

"I've almost forgotten, it's so long since," she retorted, with a touch of her usual sauciness. "Oh, Mr. Dilworth, haven't we had a dreadful time?"

"Rather bad for ladies," Henry Dilworth replied. "I'm glad to see you better, however."

"I'm obliged to be better, in spite of the weather, for it won't give me any help towards it. Last night I think I was frightened out of my sickness. I never closed my eyes a minute; I suppose nobody did. You may imagine what my sister felt."

"I wasn't so *very* much afraid," Agnes said softly. Then, when Mr. Dilworth came and stood next to her, she continued in the same low tone, "I said that verse over many times when the ship was tossing so. I think it helped me a little."

"What is the child talking about?" Kate asked, with a little stare of astonishment.

"A verse in Longfellow," Agnes answered, "that Mr. Dilworth reminded me of."

"Oh, Longfellow!" Kate replied, opening her eyes wider still. "I shouldn't have supposed Mr. Dilworth would read Longfellow."

There was something of the fine lady's polite insolence in her way of saying it, but this passed unperceived by her sister and Mr. Dilworth. It was replied to by her husband.

"Nor I," he said drily; "it's more a school-girl's style of poetry."

"What do you mean by that?" she asked, softening at once, as she always did, when her husband came into the question; and thereupon the two fell into conversation together, leaving Agnes and Mr. Dilworth to talk undisturbed.

"I'm glad the storm's over," Agnes said. "It is so terrible when it lasts so long! It is over, isn't it?" she asked, appealing to him.

"The wind has certainly fallen to-day," he answered cheerfully.

"And it's pleasant to see a little land, although it is land of such a miserable sort," she continued, her eyes turning to some desolate rocks which they were approaching.

"I don't know about that," Harry Dilworth said; "we've given up the custom of hugging the shore. Next to a good harbour the open sea's best in a storm."

"But if you are wrecked?"

"You are not so likely to be wrecked."

"But if you are?"

"Well, if you are, of course it's good to have some solid ground to get on."

"That's what I think. So that I like to look at those ugly islands. Aren't they ugly? And the sea-birds swarm over them so. I suppose nothing else lives there. It would be too dreadful. It makes me think of my own home to see land again. It is so beautiful at home where I live. There are such woods and such rivers! The hill rises right up behind the house. The road runs

in front; and then there's the river with the stepping-stones across."

"What are you telling Mr. Dilworth?" Kate interrupted, in renewed surprise, and with evident disapprobation. She was not aware of the interview which had established a confidential feeling of friendship between the two: and she did not like to hear her sister discoursing of her own home to this Australian. It was "too intimate."

"As if he cares to hear about our little village!" she said.

Agnes blushed vividly at the reproof; but she made a little effort to defend herself.

"Perhaps it was foolish. But then I'm not clever. I can't talk like you, Kate, about things I never saw."

"Who wants you to be clever? That's quite another thing. Come away with me now. I came up for a little cheerfulness after being in the horrid cabin so long; but I'm sure the sea looks horrid, and that land looks horrid, and the sun only shines enough to show distinctly how horrid everything is. How you *can* talk of Longfellow in such a scene passes my comprehension!"

Agnes followed her sister meekly. She thought that Kate was "cross" through being ill, a phenomenon not without precedent in her experience. When the two girls had disappeared, Jack and Henry Dilworth remained looking silently at the rugged islets towards which they were driving. These were mostly mere jagged bits of rock, fretting the waters which broke stormily around them. They were treeless and desolate, the haunt of countless sea-birds, which disturbed the air by their cries.

One rock alone, which the ship passed last of all, and some time after the ladies had gone below, was large enough to be called an island. It rose like a table from the water, with steep cliff sides, and level dreary top. Only in one place there seemed to be a tiny beach of jagged rock and broken stone, where a footing could be secured above the water's surface and below the face of the cliff.

"I don't remember seeing these islands as we went," Jack remarked.

"We've no business to be seeing them now; but we've been driven out of our course, and are a good deal further south than we ought to be. They are the Cross Islands."

"Not promising places for a settlement."

"No. A man might scrape enough together there to keep himself alive if need were, I suppose, but not much more."

"I'd rather not be the one to try the experiment," said Jack; and then he went below to his wife, for it was already getting dusk.

Another passenger strolled up to Henry Dilworth and remarked, "We've got the worst over at last."

"H'm!" was the answer, grimly enough given; "I can't say, I'm sure. We've got some dirty weather before us yet. I shouldn't care to have any women belonging to me on board."

This was a new sort of reflection for the solitary, independent man to make; but the passenger was only interested in its direct application.

"Why do you say so? The wind's fallen, and the ship's right and tight, in spite of all she's come through. You're not used to the sea, perhaps."

"The land is more in my way, certainly; but

I've seen a thing or two on 'the great deep' in my time. Any man must, who goes backwards and forwards about the world much. What I'm thinking is that the clouds over there are getting into a knot, just where the wind comes from, and they'll have to loose themselves somehow. When they begin, I expect that we're in for it worse than we had it before. And I don't much like the way the ship takes the water in bad weather. She's a new ship, but that's not always the best thing. A ship in good condition that's been tried is what I like. Once or twice last night I thought she was going to behave in an ugly fashion. A ship in such a storm as that should be like a living thing with a hand she knows guiding her. However, we've got a good captain, and that's in our favour."

Nearly all the passengers went to bed early that evening, tired out by the sleepless hours of the night before. Before long the wind rose again, and the storm renewed itself with increased violence. Most of them slept through the noise of it, partly out of sheer exhaustion, partly because they were getting used to the situation and beginning, by force of habit, to fear it less.

Henry Dilworth remained on deck. The appeal of Agnes had touched him deeply, as a new and strange experience; and the soft outlines of her sweet face haunted him now in the darkness. It was a face made for sunshine and caresses; it was out of place in the wildness of the storm. The fitting thing to do would have been to lift its owner out of the tossing ship, and put her down safely in some warm and cosy corner of the world. But miles and miles of stormy sea were heaving their hungry waters between her and a haven of safety; she must take her chance with the rest and go through the dangers and discomforts for which she seemed so little fit.

In the darkness some hours afterwards Henry Dilworth found his way to the saloon, where Jack had fallen asleep with a book in his hand.

"I'm glad you've not gone to bed," he remarked.

"I was just thinking of it," Jack said, waking and yawning; "every one else has gone long since, and is fast asleep by this time. How the ship tosses! It's worse than last night."

"Mrs. Langford has gone to bed? and her sister?"

"At nine o'clock. They were altogether done up, poor things!"

"Don't disturb them, then. It's no use frightening them before it is necessary; let them sleep while they can. But I'd come on deck myself if I were you."

"Anything wrong?" asked Jack, wide awake on the instant.

"I'm afraid there is; a good deal. We're pretty well damaged by this gale already, and if it lasts I don't see how the ship can stand it. It's about as much as they can manage now to keep her head right and let her go where the wind takes her; and this isn't altogether a part of the sea where I'd choose to let the wind have the driving of us. There are rocks on both sides of our course, I fancy, for a good distance now."

"I'll come on deck," Jack answered laconically.

On deck, in the darkness, the scene—what there was of it—was desolate. There was a good deal to be heard and felt, however. The ship plunged and struggled in the rough waters like a

creature frantic with an effort beyond its strength; and the wind-beaten ocean showed no signs of weakness; it sent wave after wave to the battle, each as strong as the last.

"It looks a bad business if the wind doesn't drop," Jack remarked to Henry Dilworth, as they stood in the most sheltered place they could find.

"A very bad business."

Jack lit his cigar—a matter of difficulty under the circumstances—like a man prepared to make the best of things so long as he had the chance of it.

"Poor Kate!" he said; "if this sort of thing had to be, it's a pity it wasn't on my way to England instead of now."

"Yes," answered Henry Dilworth with earnestness; "it's not the same thing when you've women belonging to you to think of. I never had—at such a time as this. If things come to the worst, and you have to see to your wife, I'll look after her sister."

"You're very good. I hope there'll be no occasion, however."

"I hope there won't," was the answer, and nothing more was said of the matter. But Henry Dilworth had given his word, and when occasion came he fulfilled it to the uttermost.

CHAPTER VII.

DARKNESS AND DEATH.

AGNES had fallen asleep utterly worn out by emotion and wakefulness. The rising of the storm only rocked her at first, it seemed, to deeper slumber; then it crept into her dreams and wove strange unrealities there. The roaring of the waves, the groans of the ship struggling against an enemy too strong for it, the loud voices shouting above the storm, and the ominous crashing of timber, took fantastic forms of trouble in her dreams.

She was struggling to cross the stepping-stones to her own home, and always when she got a couple of yards in any direction the water flowed over the next stone and forced her to turn back. She could not land on either side, for her approach was the signal of the rising of the water, which subsided behind her and surged in front of her. Over the flooded stepping-stones great tree trunks were carried, and the rain poured; behind her were sunshine and dry stones; but as often as she fled from one to the other the circumstances were reversed and she found herself plunging into the flood and the storm. She could hear the rain and the wind rush into the trees on each bank as she tried to reach it. Her sister Susie, who stood on the road by the house, was enveloped in the tempest when they tried to meet, but between them the river flowed gently whenever they moved apart.

At last she saw Henry Dilworth approaching on the other side, and he put out his hand to help her; then she heard the crack of an ash tree on the brink, torn up at its roots by the rush of a current which swept over the whole face of the river, engulfing bank and road; and felt herself borne away—somewhere—with a hand she could not grasp snatching at hers.

She woke with a confused sense of unusual noise or silence, she did not know which; a shock, or the absence of a shock, had roused her suddenly. There was a creaking of boards and a shivering of the ship as if it too stood arrested in an uncomprehended nightmare fear; and there was a great noise of rushing water, the loud cries of voices, but, beyond these things, something strange in the position of affairs, something new in her sensations, which she could not at once define.

She could feel the shock of a great wave striking the ship, which seemed to quiver and shrink, like a wounded creature trembling under a blow it can no longer escape and has no strength to resist; but, in spite of this, there was an incongruous impossible feeling of stillness; and then she began to realize that the ship was not tossing any more.

She had no time to consider what this meant, or for any further thought at all, for there was a sharp knocking at her door and the voice of Jack saying, "Agnes, are you awake?"

"Yes," she answered, starting up.

"Don't be frightened, but get dressed at once, as fast as you can, in your warmest clothes. Never mind collars and such things. There's something wrong, and we must go on deck. I'll come for you in five minutes."

Something wrong! Her first feeling was that she had lived all her life aware of this hour, which was dark with a horror beyond her nature to endure; her first instinct was to throw herself on the pillow and sob in passionate despair. She could not meet the elements raging against her life; let them take her as she was, without calling upon her for any effort first. But the habit of obedience was strong within her; she roused herself, and with trembling fingers put on the warm travelling costume which she had been wearing of late. She was obedient, even about the collar, and hastily knotted a woollen scarf round her neck instead; she was in that confusion of mind which makes it impossible to realize whether the time occupied in doing a necessary thing is long or short, and she seemed to be struggling through a thousand moments, in each of which the desire confronted her of sinking on the floor in a stupor of horror; but the instinct of escape and the habit of obedience were stronger, and she put all her clothes on, even to the waterproof. She was drawing the hood of it over her head when Jack's voice was heard again, saying—

"Are you ready? I'm taking Kate up, and then I'll come for you."

"I'm ready now," she answered, and plunged at the door to open it; but Jack was already gone. When she knew that she was left in solitude for a little longer, a horrid fear came over her; she fancied that the ship would go down at once, and that she would be swallowed up in the darkness alone. To drown in the open water seemed at that minute a privilege. She could not bear to wait; and so she struggled up by herself. When her head was on a level with the deck she noticed for the first time how much the vessel slanted; the boards looked, to her excited imagination, like a steep hill: some persons, dark objects in the darkness, appeared to be stumbling across the slope just below her. At that moment, while she hesitated, there was a great rush of water over the

lower half of the vessel; it engulfed the figures, and poured down upon her, catching her breath and forcing her to cling to the rail her hand was upon. Some one caught her at the moment, and she heard the voice of Henry Dilworth.

"Is that you, Miss Leake? You should have waited. I was coming for you."

"I dared not wait. I was afraid. What is the matter? Where are we?"

"We've run on a rock, but I hope we shall get away all right. The boats are being prepared. Come with me; I'll take you to your sister. But you must do as you're told."

The rush of water was for the moment gone. The slope of deck was clear, apparently there was no one on it.

"I—I thought some people were there," Agnes said, wonderingly.

"Did you? Never mind. Come on."

He spoke with authority, and lifting her actually in his arms, ran with her to a higher place, where Jack stood with Kate clinging to him.

"I'm off to help with the boats," Henry Dilworth said to Jack Langford, as he placed her in the securest corner. "Stay where you are, and you're right. The ship won't break to pieces for a good half-hour yet, the captain believes; and she won't go down before she breaks. She's too well spiked for that."

"You'll tell us when to come."

"Yes; only keep here with the ladies. And, whatever you do, don't be tempted to get into the first boat; it's almost certain to be overloaded. I'll come when it's time for you to take your places."

"If we've struck a rock can't we be landed on it?" Kate asked, speaking for the first time. Her face was white, her features set—all the youthful vivacity gone from them; but she held her head erect, as if defiant of terror, and she clung to Jack (with whom at least it was something to die) as if she had forgotten Agnes. Jack put his arm round his sister-in-law, but he did not speak to her; and he looked every moment from the dark scene about him into his wife's white face.

"There's nothing to land on that the sea is not breaking over."

"Can any boat live in this water?" Kate asked again.

"Yes, when it's clear of these breakers. The storm is subsiding; it has been doing so for the last half-hour; but the ship was injured before, and didn't answer to the helm."

There was silence after that. Kate lifted her face once for her husband to kiss, and he said, "Poor child!" with indescribable compassion and compunction; but the brightness of her eye lighted up her features with a look not altogether pitiable. Neither of the two addressed Agnes, and she did not attempt to speak; her stupor of wonder and horror was too great.

The violence of the tempest was certainly subsiding; the water no longer beat with such continued fury against the wreck, but at intervals a great wave struck it and washed all its lower portion, as it had done when Agnes watched the mysterious disappearance of those figures on the deck. Many of the passengers were already beyond the need of boats; how and when they had gone in the darkness and confusion, out of the way of all help, the great waves only knew. Others were

waiting on deck, half-dressed, wet through, and shivering with cold and fright. They had hurried up at the first alarm and dared not go down again for warmer clothing. When the first boat was ready, all those poor creatures were eager to get into it, and it was soon filled. There was plenty of time for the preparation of the next boat, and it was not considered desirable to fill this one only with its crew and helpless women; some of the men belonging to these women had therefore been encouraged to go with them, while a few of the women themselves were advised to wait for the next boat. But when the last moment came and the boat was considered full, several of those who had been afraid to enter it, and who had elected to remain for the next, were terrified at the idea of remaining on the ship even for a few minutes longer. They passionately demanded that room should be found for them. One young couple, with whom the Langfords had been rather intimate, encouraged by the example of Jack and Kate, had at first resolved to wait for the second boat. But the wife's courage failed her at the last moment; she begged to be taken at any risk, and her husband, with their baby in his arms, hurried her away, throwing back a word of farewell to the Langfords as he went.

Then the panic spread to another of the little group. A woman with four children had been brought there by Henry Dilworth. She was going out to join her husband in Australia, and Henry Dilworth had shown her a good deal of kindness on the voyage; he had told her now to wait until he came to take her away; but her confidence in his judgment could not resist the force of the general example. She also hastened away with her children, and begged for a place in the first boat. Room was made for herself and the youngest child, then two others were given to her, in answer to her entreaties, but the eldest was not allowed to join her.

"It's no use; there are too many already. He'll be safer in the next boat," was the answer.

She stood up, in spite of all remonstrances, gesticulating wildly, while the boy sobbed forlornly on the deck.

But her anguish and anxiety were soon over. The boat was struck by wave after wave as it cleared the ship, and it did not rise buoyantly on the water. The woman cowered down, frightened, among her children; the young couple clasped hands, and looked into each other's faces for the last time; then there was a great cry, a tumult and confusion in the darkness, and the agony was over.

Henry Dilworth had brought back the boy to the little group still waiting, consisting now only of the Langfords and Agnes. The child was still sobbing, and asking for his mother.

"Will you take care of him, Miss Leake?" Henry Dilworth said. "He is very much frightened."

Agnes looked at the boy, and put out her spare hand to him; that was all she was capable of doing.

"Where is his mother?" asked Jack.

"She went in the first boat," Henry Dilworth answered briefly.

"And what has become of it?" Jack asked hastily. "It should have a light; I don't see it

anywhere; and the people cried out. Jones and his wife were on it. I hope nothing has gone wrong."

"What's the use of asking?" Henry Dilworth answered, as he hurried away.

"I suppose he will come back for us?" Kate said in a subdued voice.

"Yes, I suppose so."

"At any rate, we have had a quarter of an hour longer through taking his advice. It's a long wedding-journey we are likely to take together, isn't it, Jack?"

"I don't know, darling. There's no reason why we shouldn't get away safely."

"The other boat has gone down, though he would not tell us so; and *our's will*. Poor Mrs. Jones has got her experience over; *our's* is to come. Well, I don't regret *anything*; do you?"

As she looked at him, her eyes were shining with excitement; they were courageous and defiant eyes, that demanded the answer she asked for.

"My dear love! nothing but that I should have brought you into this danger."

"But if I don't regret it, why should you? If I were not here, it would mean that I had never loved you, that I had not been married to you. It seems to me now, though I never thought so before, that I hadn't it in me to be a very good wife. But now it doesn't matter; you'll never know it, never believe it. It has been perfect so far. Say you regret nothing."

"I regret nothing, darling, if you are satisfied."

Kate kissed him again, with a strange little laugh; then her eye caught the shrinking figure of her sister.

"Poor Agnes!" she said; "with her it is all for nothing."

A moment afterwards Henry Dilworth appeared, and spoke to Jack rapidly.

"Will you take your wife? and I'll bring her sister. I'll come back for the boy after."

Kate and Jack moved away at once. Jack's arm was round his wife, and she clung to him, looking all the while into his face, and not into the darkness through which he guided her.

Henry Dilworth stopped to speak an encouraging word to the boy, telling him to remain where he was; then he began to follow the two, leading Agnes carefully, for she was perfectly passive. Suddenly he caught her back, clasping her firmly with one strong arm, while he grasped at the nearest support with the other.

Another great wave—one of the last in the subsiding storm—had struck the ship, and was washing over it. Henry Dilworth's movement was quick enough to save himself and Agnes; the sudden dash of water caught her breath, and made her cling to him with tearless, panting sobs; but that was all.

In front of them the swirling mass, every drop of which seemed full of life and power, seethed round the figures of Kate and Jack; they wavered, flung themselves together with a passionate clasp, and went down into the sucking water.

Henry Dilworth put his hand to his eyes, and tried to peer into the darkness. But the thing was over. There had been no sound, except the thunderous advent and the hollow retreat of the

water; and now there was nothing to see. The wave that had done its errand could keep its secret; the tossing surface of the sea gave sign of no life except its own.

"Come now; we've no time to lose," Henry Dilworth said abruptly.

But Agnes seemed too bewildered to move; she was looking round her with a scared face.

"No, no; let us stay here. Tell them to come back," she said, resisting his effort to draw her away.

For answer he lifted her into his arms, carried her to the vessel's side, and put her in the boat, almost as if she were an inanimate creature.

"Sit down, and keep still; I will come to you again," was all he said to her.

She looked round with terrified eagerness. There was no Kate, no Jack, no face that she knew, only men with rugged looks, only the darkness, the water, the doomed ship. The position was horrible, incomprehensible. She covered her face with her hands, and dropped on her knee. Presently the boy was put beside her.

"Let him be with the lady," she heard Henry Dilworth say. She was too frightened to understand altogether what it meant.

The captain was left on the ship to attempt his escape in the last boat, with what men remained to him. His officers had gone in the first rush of water when the vessel struck, or afterwards: who remembered? who could tell? Some of the passengers had lost their lives in the same way; some had gone down with the first boat; only the boy was left, and Agnes. She was *the* lady still alive among all those who had been on board the day before; and she was in an open boat on a stormy sea, far away from inhabited land, with a child, a dozen sailors, and Henry Dilworth.

(To be continued.)

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

WAS IT MURDER?

BY N. ROBERTSON.

THE Brackenridges had for many generations occupied a grazing farm among the level meadows along the banks of the Lew. They had gone down in the world, till old Benjamin, George's father, had become as poor as a man well can be, and yet struggle on; and father and son lived a morose and solitary life in the dilapidated house among the damp meadows. For three or four months in the year these fields were ablaze with golden buttercups; in autumn and winter "the floods were out," and the house stood on its little eminence in the midst of a wide, shallow spread of silver water. And whether the buttercups were out, or the floods, made little difference to the Brackenridges: gold or silver of any other kind they rarely saw.

Still, in Lewbridge George Brackenridge was liked, in spite of his poverty. He was not popular: for that he was too silent and reserved. But he had an old name, if he had only inherited it from yeomen; he was brave, and, moreover, he was beautiful, even remarkably so. The young doctors and attorneys of the town, who had gone to the Grammar School with him, might have told tales of George's obstinacy and revengefulness; perhaps his old father at home recollected the handsome, vindictive, boyish face which would meet him after some deprivation or punishment. But now "the boy" was twenty-five years old, and a heavy golden moustache and beard hid the set, passionate mouth; his eyes were large and calm, and his tall stature and slow movements added to the impression he made of gentle, self-contained strength. He had also a reputation for cleverness, though on what it was founded it would be difficult to say, since he talked little, and at twenty-five years old had done nothing more than bear his lot with a patience which some people called stolid.

But just at this time something happened to him which changed the whole current of his existence. He fell in love with Theresa Reed, the daughter of the Presbyterian minister in Lewbridge.

Theresa was a very pretty girl, tall and slender, with a small, flat, golden-braided head, set on a long white throat. She had also long blue eyes, and a habit of looking sideways from them, which her feminine acquaintances found exasperating, and the young men of Lewbridge found fascinating.

Her engagement to George Brackenridge caused much astonishment; she was not supposed to be the kind of girl to marry a penniless man, or to live contentedly in the damp, rat-eaten old farmhouse at Langport. Neither was she; but she knew what she was doing, or thought she did. Her one desire was to get away from Lewbridge, either to London or to the neighbouring seaport of Barton. Now, she was twenty-five years old, as well as George, and no man hitherto appeared who, in marrying her, would take her away from her native town, which she had her own reasons for detesting, apart from the fact that she felt herself capable of shining in a larger circle.

And she had discovered from George, before engaging herself to him, that it would be possible to attain her end through him, unlikely as this at first seemed.

A Brackenridge of two generations back had abandoned the hopeless flower-producing farm, and had gone to London, and had set up in business as a leather-seller. His grandson, George's cousin, was now a successful man, and in his own eyes a rich and great one. He had a large house on Clapham Common, and kept horses and carriages. The Brackenridges always held together, and a correspondence of a dawdling kind had been kept up between the cousins who had gone up and the cousins who had gone down. This George, with a not unnatural desire to make the best of his belongings, told Theresa, who immediately set herself to work upon his great love

and little ambition, till she persuaded him to write to his cousin and ask for a helping hand up the ladder. It was a painful effort to George to do this, for he was very proud, and, unless he grew rich, as men do in novels, it would involve the final giving up of his beloved and useless farm. However, Theresa made her engagement to him contingent upon his success, and he succeeded. The London Brackenridge, who was good-hearted, and believed that blood was thicker than water, promised him work, pay, and encouragement. Only George must remember that without capital it would be slow work.

"Never mind," said Theresa, bravely, seeing in the future a possible house at Clapham, and a carriage for herself. "I promise to wait, even for five years, yes—even for ten."

So, full of faith in Theresa and passionately in love with her, George said Good-bye to his solitary, sad old father, and disappeared from the damp house, and the slushy meadows, and the dull, familiar streets of Lewbridge.

His life in London was horrible to him; not only at first, but always. He did his work well, his cousin found him of use, and promised him success. But the evenings, when the reserved passionate man sat himself down in a cramped and dirty London lodging to brood, or else, half-mad with love and longing and restlessness, tramped for hours through the hurtling, gabbling crowds, or along the weary monotonous streets! And to comfort him he had letters from Theresa once a fortnight—for she did not like letter-writing—such as she wrote to her girl-friends, spending sometimes half-an-hour over the last half-page, and begging her sister in vain to "think of something else to say." After having received half-a-dozen of these letters, George almost ceased to read them; he only carried them carefully about with him, and occasionally felt the paper. Neither did he write much to her; it is difficult to correspond, when the correspondence is all on one side.

He had been in London a year before he went to see his father and Theresa. The latter constantly urged him not to come; to save the money, that they might the sooner be together "for good." On that point Theresa could write fluently and emphatically.

But at last he went down. Theresa was delighted to see him; George was much gratified that she insisted upon his staying the whole three days in her father's house; she would not quit him for a moment; when he went over to Landport to spend the afternoon with his father, she went with him, and only let him out of her sight when he was safely inside the parlour door. Old Brackenridge, afflicted as was inevitable in that house, with severe rheumatism, was delighted with Theresa; he told George that she had walked over from Lewbridge to Landport sometimes twice a week to see him. It was through no connection of ideas, but only a coincidence that George asked directly after,

"How do you like the new doctor? Mackenzie, isn't his name?"

"He isn't not to say new; he was down here eight years ago, when you were a lad. Theresa knew him, and so did you, I think, for that matter. He is old Barker's nephew, and is doing his work for him. Well, he don't do me much good, but I suppose nobody can."

"I don't remember him."

"Very likely you was away at Barton. It was that summer, may be. Oh, he is a good fellow enough. He don't get on with our rector. He's a Presbyterian, and I suppose that's why he's so thick with the Reeds."

George turned a calm inquiring gaze on his father.

"Thick with the Reeds, is he? Theresa hardly mentioned him. She didn't say either how often she came over to see you. It is awfully good of her."

"If it hadn't been for her you wouldn't have gone and left me," said the old man with mournful gruffness.

"What is Mackenzie like?" George asked Theresa as they walked quickly along the frozen road to Lewbridge.

"L—like?" she stammered. "How do you mean? To look at?"

"Nonsense, dear, no! Do you think him a clever doctor, because you see if Barker dies he will take the Landport practice, and my father will be in his hands. Is he young?"

"He is thirty. And he will not take the Landport practice; it is to be sold, and Dr. Mackenzie will buy one at Barton. He is going to live at Barton. Don't let us waste our time talking about him. Oh, George, how long do you think it will be?"

Which vague and disconnected question George thoroughly understood, and the conversation became more personal.

The next day George returned to London, promising to return home for a week or perhaps longer at midsummer. During the intervening six months he perceived with distress from his father's letters that his mind was breaking up; they grew utterly incoherent and childish. He talked much of Theresa and Dr. Mackenzie, who both appeared to visit him attentively. A vague irritation with them was perceptible in his tone; though when George tried to discover what was wrong the old man could only say they were good to him.

George's midsummer visit was paid to the farm, and though Theresa could not actually come to stay there, she spent the greater part of each day with him, generally bringing her young sister. She was most affectionate and attentive to her lover; she accompanied him even in the one call he paid to the Rectory, where she knew her presence would be looked upon as an impertinence, and where she had not been invited. She bore the polite snubbing she received from the Rector's wife with angelic sweetness, so that George came away in one of his calm rages with his old friend, and did not go to the Rectory again during his visit—which was perhaps what Theresa desired. And when he paid visits to the one or two other families he knew, Theresa went too. Chance aided her, and George went back to London unaware of what the whole population of Lewbridge and Landport were aching to tell him: namely, that Theresa was playing him false; that she was popularly believed to be only waiting for old Dr. Barker's death, that she might know if Mackenzie would settle in Barton, and bestow her affections accordingly. For though London was better than Barton, Barton in three months was preferable to London in three years. And Theresa felt she

should enjoy the position of a fashionable doctor's wife at Barton.

And in August Dr. Barker died, and one morning, a week after (on Theresa's usual day for writing) George did not come to the office.

Dr. Mackenzie had decided for the Barton practice, and consequently Theresa had decided for Mackenzie. She had not anticipated any particular difficulty about informing George of the change in her plans; but in spite of this confidence in herself, she had found her letter impossible to write, and, after struggling with it the whole day, had merely sent a note, informing "Dear Mr. Brackenridge" that "his sincerely, Theresa Reed," would be glad to see him. "George will make a scene, and I can run out of the room, or call papa," she reflected. "Anyhow, I don't know why, but I can't write it. Besides, if I did write, and Lyndsay Mackenzie saw the letter, he would find out that George and I had been really engaged." The astute young woman had represented the affair as dubious and provisional to every one but George, upon whom it was wiser to make it binding.

George had received Theresa's letter while standing with his hat on prepared to start for the office. He turned it over in his fingers, and then went out as usual, only making his way way to Victoria instead of to the City. He took the express to Barton, which would involve his returning by a slow train from Barton to Lewbridge; but he could not wait for the direct train to Lewbridge. It was twelve o'clock when he reached his destination; as the train rolled into the station he saw Theresa, Mackenzie (whom he had once seen, on his last visit home), and her younger sister Ruth standing on the opposite platform. For one wild moment he thought they had come to meet him; then he realized that they, or some of them, must be going to Barton. He hurried round to the other platform in time to see the Barton train going out, and the two girls smiling and waving adieu to Mackenzie in the train. George waited till they turned. The hand he gave Theresa was icy cold, but even the surprise and a little fear of what was coming could not drive the triumphant smile out of her shallow eyes. Only little Ruth seemed scared, and cast inquiring sidelong looks at one and the other, as she dawdled along the streets, first by George's side, and then by Theresa's. The road lay through the town, and no conversation was possible; they were stopped half-a-dozen times by acquaintances, with whom Theresa exchanged gay remarks, only secretly reflecting how tiresome it was that she should have to walk through the town with George "under the circumstances." She hoped that Mackenzie had not seen him, reasonable and unexacting as that gentleman was.

Theresa left George in the dining-room while she went to take off her hat, and warn her sisters to keep out of the room. When she came back he was sitting as she had left him, and as he had sat in the train, gazing fixedly before him. Theresa had no time or thoughts to spare for other people's feelings and views; she only thought impatiently how stupid George's silence always was, and how selfish it was of George not to help her, when he must guess from her letter, and what he had seen, what she intended to say. And she was so right! her conduct was so sensible, so natural, so entirely to be expected. A natural

feeling of indignation rose in up her breast against the man, and helped her to break the disagreeable pause.

Conscious of the right on her side, she did not make a pretence of asking George to release her from her engagement, she said, with the simplicity of unconsciousness—

"George, I thought I'd better tell you myself than write it, that I've been thinking lately that our engagement was a mistake. I oughtn't to have promised to wait; father says so. And it wasn't really an engagement, you know; I always told everybody so; and Dr. Mackenzie liked me when he was here eight years ago, only he was so young, and he had no money; but now he is going to have a practice at Barton; and—you understand, don't you?—and you won't be too vexed? I made a mistake, George; I'm very sorry. Dr. Mackenzie is a Presbyterian too."

All this was uttered a little hurriedly, but with Theresa's usual commonplace voice. The self-satisfied smile habitual to her did not vanish out of her eyes as she spoke.

Then, as George did not reply, the incredibly empty-hearted simpleton grew impatient.

"Do speak, George! You might say something to relieve my mind. I do think it is selfish of you."

Then George got up and towered over her.

Theresa glanced at his eyes, and grew frightened. He made an effort to speak; when he succeeded, it was with the thick tongue of a paralytic.

"You are engaged to me," he said, with difficulty.

"I was perhaps, but I'm not now; I won't be. I'll never marry you, and it was not really an engagement. If I had ever seen you look like that, I never would have done it!" cried Theresa, growing excited and incoherent.

"You are engaged to me!" repeated George in the same mechanical, muffled tones. He caught Theresa by the wrists and drew her to him, though she struggled and even began to cry. He was silent for a minute; Theresa had time to look at his face for the effect of her tears. What she saw made her shut her eyes, and sink, sobbing, into a seat, really frightened for the first time in her life. She heard George's changed, hoarse tones muttering into the air over her head; only his last words she understood.

"If you marry another man, I will kill him and you too."

She did not speak; she dared not even open her eyes. In the darkness she heard him shuffle past the table like a blind man. Then she heard him fumbling at the door, and a minute after the hall door shut softly.

Even then she dared not move; it was fully five minutes before she burst into her father's study with the story of her woes and wrongs. From that placid and reasonable gentleman she received much consolation. "Her behaviour had been blameless; she had a perfect right to break a merely conditional engagement; she was well rid of a man of such a violent temper, and George's threats were wicked and profane, and, moreover, absurd. Finally, she had her father's approval and blessing, and likewise the approval of her own conscience for an action that was wise on her own account, and certain to benefit her family." Thus the Rev. James Reed.

No one knew what George Brackenridge did;

for the next few days. He did not go the farm, and it was almost a week before he reappeared at the office of his cousin, looking much as usual. He forgot to explain his unpermitted absence, but the good, pompous cousin had had a letter from old Brackenridge, who was full of rage against Theresa, and expressed his feelings with vulgar plainness. In consequence, George was left unmolested and unquestioned; only the Clapham cousins were very kind to him. He took the kindness mechanically; he had always been so quiet and self-contained that no difference in his manner was perceptible. Perhaps only his father might have divined something of what was going on within him.

George had returned to London about a month when he wrote to tell his father that he was going to Australia for a year. The Brackenridge firm wanted some business transacted there, and the head of it decided to send his cousin George, partly with the benevolent intention of giving him a change of scene, and partly because his interests were at one with those of the firm, and he could be trusted. He was to sail on the 4th of November in the *Tasmania*, he said, and should come down to stay with his father for a week before sailing.

This news renewed Benjamin Brackenridge's rage against Theresa. Indeed he talked so violently that the rector, who had known him for many years, came to beg him to subdue his wrath and moderate his language. The threat George had used to Theresa had leaked out, and was common property; probably because that young lady, on reflection, had considered George's disappointment as an indirect compliment, and had confided her affected dread of him to all her feminine friends.

Mr. Marted, therefore, represented to the elder Brackenridge the folly of his conduct, and the danger of still further exciting George's anger.

From thenceforth the old man confined himself to muttering and scowling in private. In spite of his failing faculties, he had wit enough left to keep George entirely to himself during the week his son spent with him at the end of October. The rector helped him, and so well did he manoeuvre, that George, who asked no questions, returned to London without having heard that Theresa's wedding was fixed (by an odd coincidence) for the 4th of November, the day the *Tasmania* was to sail.

Theresa heard of this coincidence, and was almost sorry. She would have considered George's despairing presence as a sort of feather in her cap; she was too incapable of any passion herself to fear him, and she had nothing to fear from Dr. Mackenzie, who, though a good fellow enough in his way, was, it need hardly be said, very little troubled with refinement or scrupulous delicacy of feeling.

The Mackenzies were to return to Landport a week after the wedding, and to remain there till Christmas, when a new doctor would take old Barker's Landport practice, and Mackenzie would remove to Barton.

And so, on a dismal November day, Theresa Reed and Lyndsay Mackenzie were married, and George Brackenridge steamed down the river in the *Tasmania*, not knowing. Did he of his own free will try to place an impassable barrier

between himself and temptation, or did he think that life would be long enough for a later revenge? At all events he sailed in ignorance.

It was a month later, about the beginning of December. The winter had set in very hard; three inches of snow covered the ground, and even the Lew was frozen a couple of inches deep, except in one or two places where springs bubbled up, one of which spots was close to the little stone bridge over the Lew, between Landport village and Landport farm. Theresa and Dr. Mackenzie had returned from their short honeymoon to old Dr. Barker's house, and Mackenzie was very busy. One of his most troublesome patients was old Benjamin Brackenridge, whose rheumatism had finished by confining him to bed, and who was obliged to send for Mackenzie, he being the only medical man within reach. But Brackenridge seemed to have forgotten his hatred of Theresa and the doctor; he grew daily more childish, and seemed even unconscious of George's absence. He greeted his doctor with pleasure, and tried to detain him with senile gossip.

It was the 6th of December, and ten o'clock in the evening. The doctor and his wife were sitting over their dining-room fire, when a sharp ring came to the surgery bell.

The maid went to open the door, and came in after a minute with a puzzled face.

"If you please, sir, it is a man—a gentleman—from old Mr. Brackenridge's, and he says he's much worse, and will you go over at once. He says Mr. Brackenridge is dying."

Mackenzie groaned. He did not in the least believe that old Brackenridge was dying; he did not expect that event for months. He believed that the old man was attacked by severe pain, and that his presence would be of little use. However, he was too well-trained to do more than groan; he got up and muffled himself up, with Theresa's assistance.

"Who has come down for the doctor?" asked Theresa of the maid, who stood looking as if she had something more to say.

"Well, ma'am, it looks exactly like Mr. George, who, they say, is gone to Australia."

"Nonsense, Phoebe!" And Theresa flew to the window, forgetting that the surgery door was round the corner of the house.

"It do, ma'am, indeed. It is someone just as big as Mr. George; only the voice don't sound the same. He's got on a great coat, and his mouth all muffled up in a comforter."

"Mr. George Brackenridge is on his way to Sydney; it is probably one of the London Brackenridges; they have been promising the old gentleman a visit."

"Ah, to be sure!" said Theresa. But she followed her husband to the surgery door, which was half glass. Under the wall, on the opposite side, a dark figure was pacing up and down, with its head bent forward.

Theresa prepared to return with her curiosity unsatisfied.

"Don't wait up for me, Theresa," her husband turned at the door to say.

"I will till eleven," she declared as she shut him out.

At eleven Dr. Mackenzie had not returned, and Theresa was just preparing to go upstairs to bed, when another loud ring came to the bell.

Phoebe, who was also just going to bed, answered it grumblingly. She was gone rather a long time, and came back with a message from Dr. Mackenzie:—

"Old Mr. Brackenridge was very ill; there was no one in the house but an old farm-servant. Would Theresa take certain things from the surgery, and what she would want for herself for the night, and come up to the farm to help nurse him? The messenger would take care of her."

Theresa stood, surprised, vexed, hesitating. She did not in the least desire to go out into the cold night on an errand of mercy. It was very odd of Lyndsay to send for her. Perhaps old Brackenridge, who used to like her, had asked for her? At any rate she must go; she could not refuse a request of her husband's yet—and before Phoebe. She went, however, to say a word to the messenger; but he was pacing the path under the wall, six yards away, and only joined her as she came out, wrapped up, with her bag in her hand. They disappeared into the gleaming, snowy night, and Phoebe bolted the door behind them.

The next morning a farm labourer, on his way from the farm to the village, saw a small black object lying by the riverside on the snow, not far from the bridge. He went down to fetch it; it was a woman's hand-bag, and on opening it he found a handkerchief and one or two other things, marked with Theresa's name. He took it on with him, intending to leave it at Mackenzie's house, which was not more than three hundred yards down the road.

Phoebe, who had just risen, opened the door to him. She recognized him as Issachar Hollebhone, one of the labourers at Landport farm.

"Well, Hollebhone, how is your master this morning, and when are my master and mistress coming home?"

"Mr. Brackenridge be just as he always be now-a-days. And how should I know aught of your master and mistress, my lass?"

"They have been up at the farm all night," said Phoebe.

"That I'll take my oath they haven't," said Hollebhone. "There ain't no one to let 'em in but me, and I didn't let 'em in. And for what should they come?—and the lady too, whom master can't abide?"

Phoebe looked scared. "A gentleman very much like Mr. George came down last night at ten o'clock, and fetched the doctor, and then he came again and fetched Mrs. Mackenzie; he said the old man was very ill, and wanted her. That's her bag. There now! Where did you get that?" snatching it.

"No one came to fetch doctor," repeated the man doggedly. "There ain't no one to come except me. Mr. George is gone to Australy, as you do know, my girl, and couldn't nohow come to fetch doctor."

"You're a fool, Hollebhone," said the girl angrily. "If it wasn't Mr. George, it was one of the grand London folks—as like him as two peas. I saw his yellow beard, I did, spite of his comforter."

"And as to the bag," went on Hollebhone, unneeding the interruption, "I found it down by the river, and, thought I'd get a pint and 'Thanky' for my pains at least. There ain't no London Brackenridges to house, and I tell ye

nobody has been nigh us since doctor come day before yesterday. Nobody ain't set foot in the place, my lass."

Phoebe began to grow frightened. She hurriedly opened the bag, and examined the contents. Everything was there that she had helped Theresa to put into it overnight.

"What shall I do?" she cried. "I'm sure something is wrong. Hollebhone, do come over with me to Mr. Maxted."

Hollebhone was willing, after the administration of beer, and the two hurried down the village to the Rectory, where they caught Mr. Maxted just beginning breakfast. Directly he had heard the story he decided that something must, indeed, be wrong, and that the first thing to be done was to examine the place where the bag had been found. Taking Hollebhone and his gardener with him, he proceeded down the road. All footsteps had long been trodden out on the road, but about twenty yards before they came to the bridge a woman's footprints *alone* diverged from the path on to the printless snow, and down, down the gentle slope to the pool in the frozen river, which the rising spring had kept open. There Hollebhone's large marks met hers; the Rector made the man tread in them again, and satisfied himself as to whose they were. He was stooping down to do this, when he saw another track of footsteps at about twenty yards distance. He went up to them, and found they were a man's, with the toes directed towards the river; they ended at another point of the pool. He traced them back to the road; the man had diverged from the path nearer the bridge by ten yards than the woman. There were no other footsteps, except Hollebhone's, going and returning from the slight depression in the snow, where the bag had lain.

"I'm afraid there has been an accident," said Mr. Maxted, looking troubled. "Run and fetch drags and ropes, and more men."

In the confusion that followed the marks were all trampled out, but the Rector, Hollebhone, and the gardener had taken good heed of them.

After half-an-hour's work and waiting the body of Theresa Mackenzie was taken from the river, a few yards from the bank, and in a few minutes her husband was found close to the point where the track of a man's footsteps ended. They bore no signs of struggle; Theresa had not even lost her bonnet, though her long yellow hair had fallen down from under it. Mackenzie's watch was in his pocket; it had stopped at twenty minutes past ten.

This event caused the wildest excitement in the village and in Lewbridge; and in fact it excited much attention all over the country.

The absence of accompanying footsteps proved that the husband and wife had not been murdered, Mackenzie had not drowned Theresa; their footsteps were wide apart. There was no reason for suicide, either single or double; those who knew the two scouted the idea. And then who was the mysterious messenger who had come for them, and who Phoebe declared at the inquest exactly resembled George Brackenridge?

Mr. Maxted, who was attached to George, and remembered his wild words, was anxious and uneasy till he received letters from London, from James Brackenridge and others, assuring him that George had really sailed in the *Tasmania*. The

fact could be proved. And if any other proof were wanting, old Benjamin had received a letter from George which was written when he had been a week at sea, and which was dated November 10. In it George for the first time spoke of Theresa; he asked his father to send him word "if she married Mackenzie." This letter the old man showed to Mr. Maxted; he had of course heard of the double murder or suicide, but the report of George's appearance had been kept from him.

So the husband and wife were buried in Landport churchyard, with the mystery of their terrible death unsolved.

One day in the following March, Hollebone came in haste to fetch the rector to his master. A letter had come from Sydney, and the old man was crying and raving. What was in the letter Hollebone did not know.

Mr. Maxted found the old man in a violently excited state, clutching the Sydney letter, and weeping. Nothing intelligible could be got from him, but at last he was persuaded to give up the letter to his friend. It was from Captain Ayres, of the *Tasmania*. George Brackenridge had either jumped or fallen overboard, on Dec. 10, at 12 o'clock a.m., in lat. 40° 25", long. 130° 17".

It was only as the rector was walking home, wearied with his efforts to soothe George's father, that the oddity of the coincidence struck him. George Brackenridge had died on the same day as the Mackenzies. He went to his study and made a little calculation. Allowing for difference of longitude, George's death had happened about five minutes before 10 p.m.

Mr. Maxted kept his knowledge and any conclusions he may have arrived at entirely to himself. This was easy, as George's father only lived another week.

Phoebe is still convinced that it was George Brackenridge who came to her master's door on that December evening. She has been laughed at, scolded, and argued with, and is probably far more positive of the fact than she was at the date of its occurrence.

A natural consequence.

But who murdered the Mackenzies?

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

PART II.

A DESERT SOLITUDE.

CHAPTER I.

DRAWING NEARER.

WHEN day dawned a boat was tossing on the rough water near a desolate island, the largest of those rocks which the vessel had passed the evening before. Landing there was difficult, and it was necessary to wait some hours until the

great breakers should have lessened with the lessening of the storm.

Agnes had passed a miserable night, shivering with cold and terror. Her clothing was all wet through, and the rug which Henry Dilworth had thrown over her failed to keep her warm. The boy had fallen asleep beside her, but she was hardly conscious of his presence. With every plunge of the boat she expected to go down into the water and rise no more.

It was long before she dared to look around her, and then it was only to see the sullen waters heaving under a sullen sky. No ship was to be seen, nor any other boat, only the barren rocks, and the desolate sea. Grief and horror rendered her speechless; she silently rejected the food which Henry Dilworth offered her, and gazed with a fascinated dread on the dreary shore they were drawing near. It could not be that she was to be landed here with all these men—alone? And Kate—where was Kate? She dared not ask, and only looked mutely from time to time into Henry Dilworth's face, trying to see there some sign of hope.

The landing on the island proved very difficult, the men all got their half-dried clothing once more wet through in the rush through the surf. Henry Dilworth, however, found a place where Agnes and the child could be hauled from the boat to a rock above and so landed on shore dry-shod. This was the first service he was able to render them.

Afterwards all hands were busied in collecting seaweeds and bits of wreck for a fire, in cooking such food as they had, and then in seeking out some shelter for the night.

The emergency failed, however, to arouse Agnes to energy or to action. She sat in her rain-cloak, looking anxiously out to sea, and could hardly be persuaded to touch any food.

When night came and she realized in what a miserable spot she must spend it, she broke out into passionate protest.

"Is there nothing better? Can you find me nothing better? I cannot sleep there."

She spoke almost reproachfully, and Henry Dilworth looked at her with troubled eyes, grieved that he could not comply with her demands, even when they were unreasonable.

"We will make it better for you to-morrow. At least it is *safe*; nothing can happen to you there."

"How do I know?" she asked with a shudder. "There may be wild beasts."

"There are none. And if there were they should not touch you. I shall sleep a few yards away. If you call out I shall hear you."

"Why doesn't the other boat come, with Kate and Jack? I never knew why you brought me away without them."

"Miss Leake," he said gently, "whatever I have done or tried to do has been for your own safety. I promised Mr. Langford to take care of you."

"But where is he, and where is Kate? I have not dared to ask you all day. You do not mean to tell me they are *drowned*?"

His eyes were full of compassion, and his voice of sympathy.

"Do you not know? Is there any need for me to tell you?"

She was silent for a moment; then she spoke

almost angrily, "I will not believe it. Perhaps they will come yet," and so she turned and left him as if he had been to blame for all.

The next morning brought a new horror; for two bodies were washed ashore. They were those of sailors who had been left on the vessel; and their drifting to the island proved that the third boat must have made good its departure from the ship. It had probably been upset not far from the refuge it was seeking.

This incident added another terror to those already haunting the mind of Agnes. Death was a dreadful thing to her, she had never been face to face with its manifestation before; and now the horror of it spoilt even the thought of her sister Kate, and filled her with a dread stronger than the hope of reunion.

"I would rather never see her again than see her like *that*," she said to Henry Dilworth. "Kate! who was so pretty and bright and clever! I couldn't bear it; it would kill me to look at her. Do you think she will come here?"

"It isn't possible," he answered; "she was washed off the vessel, and that is too far away."

"Did you see her? Did you know, *then*?"

He glanced at her for a moment only, as if the mere recognition of her intense trouble would serve to increase it.

"It's a pity even to talk of it," he said.

"That means—that you did. And so did I; but I wouldn't believe it. It was too dreadful. Now I would rather know. It is better than to think that it happened near here; and that perhaps—some day—she will come."

It seemed useless to combat these morbid fears; they were only dulled gradually by an increasing consciousness of physical suffering and discomfort as the days went by and the situation did not change.

Agnes did not make any effort to face the position bravely; she became more and more absorbed in her own miserable sensations, more intense in her desire to escape and to forget all that had happened to her, to be comfortable once again and at rest. She had little sympathy to give to others, and no help; it was some time before she even showed any grateful feeling to Henry Dilworth.

They had been on the island for several days when a new misfortune happened to them. Some of the sailors had more than once suggested taking to the open sea in their boat, and trusting to the chance of meeting a passing ship. But Henry Dilworth had considered such a chance almost desperate at that time of the year; and the rough weather which continued for more than a week after their landing would have rendered such an attempt to escape very dangerous. He knew the misery of famine, thirst and sickness, in an open boat on a stormy sea; he believed that the inevitable exposure would kill Agnes and the child, even if the rest escaped. On the island they could at least live; there was water, and there was the flesh of the sea-birds. Some vessel must at last pass and take them off; the chance of meeting one on the open sea was hardly greater, and the chance of life was very much less.

The men yielded to his arguments and agreed at least to delay, in hope of better weather; but when a storm tore the boat from its fastenings in the darkness of the night, and they found themselves in the morning absolute prisoners on the

island, with no longer a choice of departure, they could not forgive Henry Dilworth for the advice he had given to them. This was the cause of the first and only quarrel which he had with the men.

When Agnes came out of her hut that day she found the sailors standing together in a group looking out to sea with gloomy faces. Henry Dilworth was at work near, but the rest seemed to have withdrawn themselves from him, and more than one angry glance was cast in his direction.

"Serves us right for taking a landsman's word," one man said angrily.

"It's as like as not he did it himself," another muttered with a scowl.

"If I thought that!" said the first, and he finished his sentence with an oath.

Agnes looked from one to another with perplexity, her eyes dilating, and her breath coming quickly.

"What is it?" she said in a low voice to Henry Dilworth.

He looked up from his work and smiled reassuringly.

"An unlucky thing's happened. The boat has been washed away in the night."

"But are they angry with you?"

"Yes, at this minute. They are ready to be angry with any one. They are vexed because I advised them not to go off in the boat before."

"But it wouldn't have been safe to go, would it?"

"They agreed that it wouldn't at the time; but men in their situation can't always be reasonable; 'tisn't likely," he said drily.

He waited, therefore, for a return to a more amicable mood, and went on with his own occupation as unobtrusively as possible meanwhile, neither avoiding the men nor seeking any intercourse with them. It would have been dangerous at the moment to show either fear or irritation; too much meekness would have been as unadvisable as too little temper. He knew that he was the chief protector of Agnes and the child; every little comfort that was possible in their position he assured to them. He was working now with his penknife at some bits of timber, trying to make them into something serviceable. The sailors had, so far, shown great good nature in permitting him to take the lion's share of the few materials they had at command; they were aware that it was not for his own use he took possession of them and toiled at them so ingeniously. It would be disastrous, therefore, for them to take a grudge against him; it would be terrible if they came to an open quarrel.

His patience and silence seemed to produce no good result, however. The men were too much disheartened by their new calamity to apply themselves to any task; and their temper did not improve with hours of idleness and grumbling. The worst of them, deceived by Henry Dilworth's quiet manner, began to show a bullying spirit.

It was towards evening that he separated himself from his companions and went up to Henry Dilworth.

"Look here," he said, "you stop that. You've helped yourself to enough already. We'll not stand any more of it."

Henry Dilworth glanced at him and then at the other men, to see what mood they were in. They

stood aloof, watching with doubtful but gloomy faces.

Henry Dilworth stooped over his work again and answered quietly, "What do you want it for? It's too good for firewood, so long as we've anything else; but if you want it for anything useful you must have it."

"What is it to you what I want it for? You've played the master long enough. You'll make yourself comfortable here while you watch us starve. We'll be hanged if we stand it."

Henry Dilworth stood upright and looked at him.

"Have I made myself more comfortable than any one of you? Have I helped myself to anything you've not got?"

"You're fine at talking; and so you were when you stopped us going off in the boat. You've stopped it for good and all now. But there's more ways of dying than drowning, or than starving either. And if you've fastened us here to die, I'll take care that you're not the last of us to do it."

He raised his voice as he spoke. The men drew a little nearer with a murmur of excitement, and Agnes, who had gone into her hut again, was attracted by the sound and came out with a frightened look.

Henry Dilworth spoke in a clear voice that all the men might hear him.

"My chances of life are the same as yours; I could do nothing to harm you without harming myself."

"Nay, but they're not. You're a landsman, and your best chance is on land. We're sailors, and our best chance is at sea. I've heard 'em say as you can live days and weeks without food so long as you've a drop of water, and so you're right enough where the rest of us will starve. You've cut away that boat to keep us where we are, and we're all as good as dead men now."

"It's true enough," murmured some of the watchers.

"It's a great lie," said Henry Dilworth.

Whether he had for the moment lost his temper, or whether he thought the bullying was going too far and that it was time to assert himself, is a difficult question to decide. He folded his arms, looked at his opponent, and uttered his retort distinctly.

There was a murmur and a movement among the onlookers: the angry sailor himself stepped forward with a gesture of rage. Henry Dilworth was the biggest man present, and in spite of his strong words, the calmest; but it seemed to Agnes at that moment that the whole crowd of men was about to attack him.

She had stood in the background before, unnoticed by either of the opponents. Her instincts were to remain sheltered and out of sight. She had none of that courage which prompts even timid creatures to rush into danger for the sake of sharing it with those who are dear to them. But Henry Dilworth's safety was hers: his life was her hope and comfort: without him she was lost. Therefore she went forward now, put her delicate hand on his arm, and stood facing the men with parted lips, and the courage of despair.

There was a pause of surprise. Henry Dilworth glanced down upon her, smiled a little and said:

"It's all right, Miss Leake. Hard words break no bones, you know."

She turned to him, and the expression in her eyes changed to that glance of unfathomable melancholy with which she was used to meet his sympathetic smile.

"But why do they look so? It frightens me. And yet I dare not go away."

"No, don't go. Stay and hear how little it all means. Isn't it a shame, men, to think that with death so near us all, as it may be, we must quarrel enough to frighten the only woman we've got with us?"

Most of the sailors looked crest-fallen; the appearance of Agnes, and the manner of the accused made them begin to feel that they were in the wrong. But the principal aggressor muttered something about hiding behind a woman.

"Well, I'm not ashamed of it," Henry Dilworth answered. "I've no right to quarrel, and that's a fact. No more have you, any of you, while we're stuck fast on this island. What'll they think of us in England, if we ever get there, and they hear that we couldn't agree among ourselves in such a hole as this? If it's said of us that we frightened the lady and child as badly as the shipwreck itself frightened them? Let's have no more of it."

"That's all very well," growled the sailor; "it's us that have to be satisfied, not you."

"Look here," said Henry Dilworth, with a quiet and apparently unconscious movement shaking himself free from Agnes, and stepping forward alone; "if you thought I'd done an act of treachery against the lot of you, you'd have reason to be angry; treachery would be a vile enough thing at such a time. But you're only vexed because the boat's gone: I've given you my word that it's not my fault. I'd have risked my life to keep it there; and I think when you've time to see it properly, you'll all say as much."

"Well," said one of the men, with judicial slowness: "I don't know as we've a right to say you did it; and like enough you didn't. You never did a dirty trick before, not as I know on."

"Thank you," said Henry Dilworth; "I never did; and I hope I never shall. If I advised you badly, that's another matter. I don't think I did; and I meant it for the best."

"We'll not fight about it, anyhow. It's true as we've no call to fall out among ourselves. There's trouble enough without that; but hungry men have short tempers. Come along, Bill, it's not your business more than any one else's. Let's be off to better work than having words."

The men moved away in a body, more or less sulkily, and after rather a heated discussion among themselves, they scattered to their neglected occupations. Agnes was left along with Henry Dilworth.

He had resumed his interrupted work, and he took no notice of Agnes, who sat down on the ground near him. It was not a moment when he would have chosen to look into her mind, or to offer any expressions of sympathy. His own equanimity was too deeply disturbed, his own feelings were too near the surface.

Nevertheless he was uneasily conscious of her presence, and after a short time he found it impossible to ignore the fact that, with her hand before her face to conceal it, she was quietly crying.

A reaction had followed her burst of courage and self-assertion; the little attention he had

paid to her interference, and his apparent forgetfulness of her afterwards, chilled her strangely. She had been used to close personal sympathy, to tender personal attachments; the coldness of his great kindness, the indifference and distance of his manners, for the first time made her feel alone even with him. She was a helpless child, and he a strong man; what did he know of her feelings, or what did he care?

He put down the board at last and turned round to her.

"I am afraid those foolish men have frightened you, Miss Leake."

"It isn't that," Agnes answered in a low voice, which she tried to steady, "*I was frightened, very much. But now—it is because—you don't seem to mind.*"

"I—don't mind?"

He shut up his knife deliberately and restored it to his pocket; then he stood looking at her.

"Oh, I know you are kind to me," she said, with some petulance, "you saved my life, and have done everything for me. But—you don't really care; nobody does; and—I've never been used to nobody caring."

He looked at her curiously, and did not answer. He walked away a little distance, and came back again.

"What do you want me to do?"

"Do?" she repeated, "nothing. You do everything you can. But you don't understand; you don't care, really. It made me miserable when I thought those men were going to hurt you; and you don't mind what I feel at all. You are never miserable. You feel nothing—nothing!"

"Not when I see you in trouble, and can't help you?" he asked, in a subdued voice.

"Oh, you are sorry for me, I know."

"Sorry for you!" he repeated with a gesture of impatience. "What more would you have? what more *will* you have? It's all here."

He put out both hands towards her as if he expected her to take them; then he drew back suddenly and said, "Miss Leake, don't try me more when I'm tried enough already."

"I—I don't understand," she answered, looking up earnestly into his face.

He walked away a few paces again, and came back with an altered look.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "I was talking nonsense. Don't think of it."

(To be continued.)

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. P. THEED.

CHAPTER V.

RAFFLED.

SHALL I ever forget here or hereafter, the dumb agony that came into Rachel Merritt's eyes? Her tongue literally clave to the roof of her mouth. Her lips refused to obey her. There was something in a wine-glass by the bedside. I took it up and smelt it, and finding it was brandy, I held it to her lips. A mouthful of it revived her, and the

words came, though with difficulty—"There—in the dressing-table, in the middle drawer. You take it out, and at the bottom——"

The sentence was never finished—broken off with a pitiful ejaculation, for before she could get the words out the door was flung open with no gentle hand, and Stephen Merritt himself entered the room.

"So you're well enough to receive visitors, Mrs. Merritt? I'm glad to see it," he observed grimly, with a scowl of more positive anger than I had ever seen expressed in his face before. "I expected to find you were before me, Mr. Francis, but I don't know that I should have come up here to look for you if I had not been told beforehand. Not but," he added, with a tinge of the rough friendliness which had characterised his manner to me at all times—"not but that you're welcome anywhere and everywhere at the Willow Farm, as you ought to know by this."

"As I have good reason to know," I answered warmly. "And nowhere better reason to remember than in this room and in this presence."

The farmer's eyes followed mine to the bed and the prostrate figure lying upon it, and I fancied his face softened.

"Say something kind to her, now you are here," I whispered; "you won't have the chance much longer."

"I don't believe a word of it," he muttered. "And if I did, it was not *me* she sent for to tell her secrets to. No, no—I can see through a stone wall as fast as most people, and but that I like you and wouldn't give you the credit for doing an underhand thing, I'd have it out with her now—aye, that I would."

"For God's sake, hush!" I said, "or she will hear you. If you have anything to say to me, come out and say it; but don't stay here and make a scene before a dying woman, and that woman your own wife. I will go down with you to the parlour now at once," and I laid my hand on his arm.

"You can go down yourself," he said, shaking it off; "I have something to say to *her*."

I do not know what I should have said—blundered in some way most likely in my anger and distress—had not Phillis interposed by coming up to him, and taking him by the hand as I had not seen her do, since she was quite a girl.

"He is quite right, Mr. Francis," she said calmly, with her steady eyes fixed full on his face; "he has to say good-night to mother. He will not see her again—to-night."

There was a little intentional pause between the two last words, and Merritt could not fail—whether he would or no—to understand her. He flushed perceptibly through the dusky red of his skin, and muttered something not unlike an oath under his breath; but he abandoned his intention of attacking his wife by word of mouth, and turned to follow me out of the room. As he did so, I looked back with an irresistible impulse at the dying woman. Her eyes were following our movements with such a desperate yearning in them, it was hard, even at the risk of a scene with Merritt, to resist the dumb entreaty they conveyed, and return to her. Fortunately, my common sense reminded me that what more she had to say to me could only at that moment be said in his hearing, and that she must realize even then as

well as I did that if another chance was to be vouchsafed her at all, it was yet to come.

My present aim must be, I could see, to keep my temper, if only for her sake, with her husband, and to reason him, if I could, out of the half-jealous, half-suspicious mood which had taken possession of him. With this in my mind, I preceded him into the Stone Parlour, where Mattie had been employing her few leisure moments downstairs in preparing the evening meal. Stephen Merritt seized the first pewter mug that came to his hand, filled it to the brim with the foaming beer, and drank it off at a draught. "Help yourself, won't you?" he said roughly. "I'm in no mood to wait upon anybody to-night, and so I tell you."

I took him at his word. Truth to say, I was feeling chilled all over, and was glad of anything to warm me. Of the tone he had adopted I took no manner of notice. I had made up my mind not to quarrel with him that night, come what might.

"How long had you been here, when I got back?" he demanded presently, when he had filled my plate and his own, and Mattie had slipped away upstairs, not without a deprecating glance at me, as she stood where he had his back to her at the door.

"Ten minutes, I should say. I should have been here sooner, but old Jenkins had not a trap at home, and I had to walk."

"Do you good," he observed snappishly; "it is not a matter of two miles. What should you want to drive it for?"

"Simply to get here a little sooner. You would scarcely call me over the coals for *that*?" I said, with undaunted friendliness.

"Well, it wasn't to see me you would have put yourself out," he grumbled, "for you knew I should not be back from market. I wrote it you, and none of the rest were on the look-out for you. They'd no time to be thinking of visitors; they'd a sight too much to be done upstairs. It is something to get bit or drop at the Willow Farm this last week, I can tell you, and you may make the most of it. They'll find time for you, though, I shouldn't wonder. There's nothing like being a favourite with the women," he added with a sneer.

"You did not tell me I was coming to a house of sickness," I said, eschewing his last politeness. "One would care little for the consequences if it were not for the cause. I was greatly shocked to find your wife as she is."

"You were not long finding her, as you call it," he retorted.

"She was kind enough to wish to see me," I said, "and I was only too glad she should have her wish. I should have desired it myself anyhow. I owe Mrs. Merritt my life, under Providence, and the man who could feel coldly when he owed *that* debt, would not be worth kicking, in my opinion. If I could lie in her place in her stead to-night, it would be there that I ought to lie. You forget."

"I don't—I forget nothing. Lord! if I could have forgotten some things! It was right enough you should see her. Heaven knows I'm not jealous of her; you're welcome here, or any other man! But what on earth are you to turn nurse for? There has not been a minute, day or night, could be spared out of that room; not so much as to run down here and see that the fire was alight and the

hot water on the hob. Mattie and the girl to do it all, and they 'moldered' out of their minds. And to-night when I come home—and if she was as bad as they made out in the morning, she should have been dead by rights before ever I got back—to-night, when I get back, it is Phillis opens the door to me, and, says she, when I ask her what brings her there, what I have to thank for the sight of her face. 'It is all right,' she says. 'Mother is a little easier, and I slipped away.' That was the dodge to keep me safe down here, whilst *you*, if you please, were closeted up there with her! I don't mean any offence to you, Mr. Francis. You're welcome to take it if you like, but I don't mean it. You were asked to go, and you went; but what did they want—the two of them? *She* sending for you to talk to you in secret, and the other—she ought to know better, and does—meeting me with a lie—for it was as good as a lie—in her mouth, to put me off, and keep me safe out of the way? What has my wife to say to you that I was not to hear and that Phillis was not to hear? That is what I should like to know."

"Now, Merritt," I said, "try and be reasonable. Dying folks have their fancies, and your wife is dying. It is useless your trying to shut your eyes to it. If it was a comfort to her to say anything to me, as an outsider, she could not well say to any of you who are about her——"

"You're turning it off," he broke in angrily. "You're making no answer, and you don't mean to make any. I want none of your 'if'-ing and 'and'-ing. I want to know what my wife wanted with you."

"Then I am afraid, Mr. Merritt," I retorted coolly, "you will continue to want. You cannot imagine for one moment that anything that was said to me in confidence I should repeat to the first person who asked me. If you suppose that a single word prejudicial to you passed between that poor creature and myself——"

He interrupted me with a furious expletive to know what I meant by calling her a poor creature!

"Great heaven, man," I said, "what are we any of us but poor creatures? What will you and I *feel* that we are, when we come to lie where she is lying now, but poor creatures?"

"You needn't come your cant over me," he retorted angrily; "why don't you speak out like a man, and tell me to my face that you pity her now as you've pitied her all along, because she is tied to a brute like me—that you think she is a sort of suffering angel, and a deal too good for me? Why don't you say *that*?"

"I tell you what, Stephen Merritt," I replied, my blood rising a little in spite of myself, "I am not so sure that I should not, but for the excuse that has been made for you."

His face changed and fell, and he set his lips with the old defiant expression I had seen and taken cognizance of the first time I had seen the husband and wife together.

"So she made an excuse for me—did she? And you thought it uncommon kind of her—didn't you? That was showing a Christian spirit, eh? It would be too much to ask of you what the excuse was, I suppose?"

"A great deal too much," I returned coolly. "If you don't know, without my telling you, of an excuse, and a good one, I am sorry for you."

He looked at me for a moment as if he would have looked me through and through.

"I can't make you out," he said at last. "I can't be sure whether she has told you the truth of it or not; but I've a precious good mind to tell you myself. Why is she to have it all her own way—always her own way, to the end?"

"Come, come, Merritt," I said. "She has forgiven you; the least you can do is in your turn to forgive her, and let bygones be bygones."

"Forgive her!" he shrieked. "Did not I do enough forgiving? Find me the man living who'd have kept her as I kept her, and done by her what I did. She's afraid of me, now she's dying—afraid lest the girl and I should not keep friends. And why is she afraid? Because the girl has no claim on me, and she knows it; because I've no hold on the girl, and she knows it; because for years and years I was nothing more nor less than a dupe and a tool in *her* hands. For years and years—I don't say but that when she went to church with me she thought she was free to marry me, but she began the way she went on—she began with a lie. I don't say but that she believed herself a widow, but I ask you, who think such a lot of her, what call had she to pass herself off as a maid? I was such a fool I'd have have taken her anyhow, and asked no questions; but the lie came natural to her, and I did not find her out in it. I was proud of her, and God knows when the lass came, I was proud of the lass. For five years and more the house was a happy house. You'd not have known her, and you'd not have known me. And then—curse him!—he turned up: the man that had the first right to her, the man that she'd belonged to all along. She may have thought he was dead, and she mayn't. She'd played me false in the rest, and why not in that? Anyhow, she never let on to me, but pinched, and screwed, and went shabby, she and the child, to keep his mouth shut and keep me in the dark. All that I knew of it was the change in *her*; and there was I, like a fool, begging and praying of her to tell me what ailed her, and she putting me off, first with one lie, then with another—anything in the world but the truth. It was all for the child's sake she said afterwards. There is one thing sure and certain, it was not for mine. She had never cared for me—not a brass farthing. I was somebody to work to keep her, that was the good of me. But she is one of your angels, and I am the brute that has ill-treated her. I'd like to know what *you'd* have done, if you'd been me, when the day came for you to find her out. I'd like to know what *you'd* have said to her, crying and sobbing for the dead scamp you'd have thought she'd hate the name of! Would *you* have been the one to pick her up when she went down on her knees to you, after *that*? Would *you* have been the one to take her away with you, and up to London, and before the registrar, so that, come what might afterwards, nobody should be able to say but that we were man and wife? Perhaps you would, and perhaps she'd have forgiven you as kindly as she's forgiving me," he wound up with a sneer. "And now," turning round on me fiercely and holding me, so to say, with his eyes—"now, what do you say to my forgiving her?"

I was spared the necessity of any answer, for close upon the utterance of the words the door

opened, and old Mattie appeared upon the threshold. By the tears running down her furrowed cheeks, and by the tremulous motion of her lips, I knew before the words had passed them what it was she had come to say. It was all over in the room above—Phillis was alone with her bereavement, and the paper about which the dying woman had been so anxious, and on which it was possible her daughter's future might depend, had not as yet come into my keeping.

Merritt received the announcement in sullen silence, nor did he offer to accompany the old servant upstairs. For a moment I hesitated as to what I would myself do; then, as he made no sign, I got up and followed her, on my own account.

At the door of the chamber of death we met Phillis, pale but calm.

"Did you want to see her?" she said; "you shall, by-and-by. Better leave her to Mattie and me now."

Dismissed with this gentle rebuke, I saw nothing for it but to go back to my host, and wait her pleasure, whilst the last pious offices were performed upstairs. I found Merritt smoking, with his chin supported in his hand, and his eyes staring moodily into the fire.

Where he had dropped his conversation about the living woman, he took it up about the dead.

"Had she told you?" he demanded of me. "Or was I the first to tell you?"

"She told me," I replied, "she had done you a great wrong. She did not tell me what it was—there was no need. She is dead and gone. Let the memory of that be dead and gone too. Let us bury it with her."

He answered me, after a moment's pause, without looking up.

"That's fair," he said. "I've nought to say against that."

I tried to push my advantage.

"You will bury it out and out. You will not let the thought of it come between you and Phillis, now or ever?"

"Tell me how I'm to help it, and then I'll answer you," he retorted scornfully. "Hasn't it always been between us, ever since she drove me into telling her, with her stubbornness and her temper? If it is to be buried at all, there'll have to be two at the burying—and I doubt but you'll find the second harder to get!"

I thought it likely he was right so far, and I thought well to press the question no farther. I had not forgotten my previous experience of Phillis, and the heed she had taken of my advice; nor was I at all sanguine as to the good to be derived from any amount of discussion with Merritt himself. My one object was to secure the letter, and to secure it, according to her mother's dying wish, without the knowledge of her whom it chiefly concerned. For this purpose I must contrive to pay a solitary visit to the room I had so long occupied, and the question was, should it be attempted clandestinely or openly? I decided, for a variety of reasons, on the latter course. Accordingly, I followed Phillis submissively to the door of the room; but, once there, I turned to her, with as much quiet authority as I had it in me to assume, and requested her to leave me, for the last time, alone with her mother.

"It is needless to renew your grief," I said

to her; "and I have my own thoughts of her, which I can think out better if I have her to myself for a few minutes. And, Phillis my dear, I would wish to repeat to the dead the promise I made to the living this day."

She could not gainsay me, even if she would, and she let me pass in, and herself shut me in with the Strange Presence and the dim light, without a syllable of reply. There came over me, for the moment, a feeling I cannot describe—an awe of the dead—which nothing but the strong inner consciousness that I was trying to do her the service she had most passionately desired could have overcome. I *did* overcome it, but shall I ever forget it?

The room, dingy and dismal at its best, looking dingier and more dismal than ever in the dim light of the two candles burning on the high mantelpiece—the ashes of the fire, now all but extinct, smouldering in the grate—and there, on the bed, visible between the half-closed curtains of the old four-post bedstead, on which I had come back to life long, long ago—the white, rigid outline, showing so distinctly under the sheet, of the woman, who had passed an hour or two ago for ever out of it.

It was quite true what I had said to Phillis. I had, indeed, my own thoughts to think of her, and I only trust there may be others as tender and as grateful to go up to God, and speak for her, when the right time comes! And I did, on my knees at the bedside, repeat my promise before Him to help and befriend the child she had left, to the best of my ability. Then I got up, feeling as if, having done that, I could do what remained to be done better. It was little enough on the face of it—just to open the drawer and take out the letter. The only difficulty I foresaw was the possibility of the drawer being locked, for how, in that case, was I to get hold of the keys? My mind was set at rest upon that point at once—there was no key in the lock, and I drew the drawer out as easily and noiselessly as possible. There were various things in it, *but there was no letter!*

It is needless to dwell on my dismay and disappointment. Anybody who takes the trouble to put himself most mentally in my position can imagine what that was. I did all I could think of—more perhaps than I was justified in doing; for I turned over the contents, not only of that particular drawer, but of all the others contained in the old dressing-table. It was a waste of time and trouble, and it cost me more than the time and the trouble put together, for I felt more like a thief and a spy than I should have supposed, an hour before, I ever could feel.

What Phillis thought I was about all that time by myself I have no notion. Merritt no doubt believed us to be together, and so long as we did not ask him to join us, I suppose he cared at that moment very little as to the rest. I did not stay that night at the farm—they had no room for me—nor did I come the week after for the funeral. I could not have done it without inconvenience to the house for which I travelled, and Phillis told me that same night, and before I had said a word on the subject, that she understood the sacrifice it would involve, and begged of me, as a kindness to her, not to attempt to make it.

"There are things you will be able to do for me," she said, "and through me, for *her*; but this

would be no good. To please me you will wait."

I wondered what things she meant in which I should be able to help her, being half afraid she might have it in her mind to leave Merritt, and set out, like another Evangeline, in search of her lost lover. I need not have thought anything of the kind. Her pride and her common sense would, either of them, have saved her from such romantic folly as that!

(To be continued.)

SCENTS.

I.

LAVENDER.

HOMELY but sweetest scent, suggesting rest
In deep-eaved cottages in summer-time,
Within the sound of village church-bells' chime;
Or low-born mother nursing at her breast
The lint-white headed babe, whose crooning quest
For love's pure food suggests some old-world
rhyme,

Or songs for those far from the haunts of crime;
Ne'er questioning e'en that country peace is best,
Or evening shadows falling where we lay
The patient dead to rest in whitest sheets,
Drawn from the scented silence in yon chest,
Or cupboards opened sparsely to the day,
Where hidden treasures seem once more to greet
Us who forget we ever held them best.

J. E. PANTON.

NILE CREAM.

WE had heard that there was Devonshire cream to be had, but we scarcely believed it. One afternoon we resolved to sift the matter for ourselves. It was fine weather; perhaps those who have not spent a winter in Egypt will think it unnecessary to say this; but we who have had experience in Cairo of fogs, and mists, and high blustering winds, and rainy days, and a sky laden with sand from the desert, through which no sun could shine—we think it by no means unnecessary. However, it was a fine day; not a cloud to be seen, and a brilliant sun casting such deep shadows, with outlines so sharply cut, that it reminds one of nothing but the electric light.

Out into the street we stepped from our hotel; but before we embarked on our voyage of discovery we had to seek the table of the money-changer. With something of regret we see our good English gold, kindly given us by a beneficent country (less sevenpence in the pound income-tax), exchanged for the miscellaneous coinage of France, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

The next thing is to hail a cab. Cabs here are comfortable victorias, with excellent springs, drawn by a pair of fourteen-hand horses.

Kasr-el-Nil is the first point we make for. We drive past Shephard's world-famed hotel, past the New Hotel, past the headquarter offices of the army of occupation, as a board nailed to a post some six feet high informs us. The road here is full of holes and pitfalls; but the springs of our carriage are equal to the call made upon them,

and if the ground beneath us is rugged and uneven, overhead is a canopy of arched and interlacing lebbekh trees. Very blue the sky looks where it is seen through the branches, and very bright is the sunshine where it has penetrated the thick foliage.

A drive of a mile and a half brings us down to Kasr-el-Nil. Eau de Nil is, I believe, the name of a fashionable colour, a bright greenish blue. But the waters of the Nile are a very dirty brown, like the British Channel off Watchet. The river is here about a quarter of a mile in breadth, and is crossed by an iron bridge resting on piers sunk in the bed of the stream.

The view from the bridge is very fine. On the right bank, as one looks north, in the direction of Alexandria and the sea, are houses overhanging the river, ruinous-looking buildings, like tumble-down warehouses, their dilapidated appearance being in part due to the sun-dried bricks of which they are made. Lofty palm trees fringe the western bank—really fine palm trees, very different from many elsewhere, which resemble brooms stuck on end more than anything else. In and out among the palm trees are mud hovels, such as doubtless Deborah dwelt in, when in her home beneath a palm she judged Israel of old.

On the Nile itself are seen moving to and fro rowing boats; or a barge with a sail shaped like a swallow's wing creeps slowly from bank to bank. Close under the banks of the now rapidly falling river are moored dahabeeyehs. These are large barge-like boats, with the greater part of their deck occupied by cabins, forming a complete suite of rooms. Some half-a-dozen are tenanted by English people who prefer life on the Nile's wave to the noise and smells of the town. Much the same view meets the eye, if one faces round to the south, and looks up the Nile, where it flows under the walls of old Cairo, and with divided stream forms the island of Rhoda, famed for its nilometer.

But meanwhile we are forgetting all about the cream; so we must leave any further description in which we might wish to indulge; we must pass by camels and donkeys and Arabs and Nubians and Soudanese, and hasten on to the dairy. Here it is: "Laiterie Européenne." There can be no mistake about it: "Lait garanti pur—Buerre frais." The dairy is close to the banks of the Nile, and looks wholesome and clean. It stands in a little garden watered by a small stream of water pumped up from the river. We enter the shop; we ask for cream. The dark-skinned Arab points to a glass dish lying on the counter. "Is that cream?" we both exclaim. "Yes, that is it, and the price is a franc," so the Arab tells us. He then produces a spoon, expecting us to eat it then and there, to take it neat, "pur et simple," as it stands. But the force of old associations is too strong: cream is not to be eaten lightly in this way. Memory recalls bread and cream, strawberries and cream, apple-tart and cream; but cream eaten by itself, cream *solus*, never.

It was not thus that we had been trained in youthful days to treat this delicacy of the West Country. The influence of early education was still too strong upon us. There would have seemed something of disrespect in consuming it thus ruthlessly without any of the customary pomp and circumstance. In our very best French we

signify our perplexity to the dairyman. He seems to feel for us; at any rate, he sets about showing us a way out of the difficulty. He produces a small glass jar, and ladles the cream into it from off the plate. Then he wraps this jar round with a piece of the "Bosphore Egyptien," and after bargaining for a speedy return of the jar, receives a franc and lets us go.

Outside the dairy our cab is waiting. The bridles are off the horses' heads. If a driver has five minutes to wait, he always whips the bridles off, and buckles on nosebags full of chopped straw. Chopped straw seems to do duty for hay and oats like in Egypt. In half-a-minute the nosebags are stowed away, and the bridles are on the horses. It is astonishing how rapidly both manœuvres are executed.

I do not know that I need describe the drive back, nor the consumption of the cream. It was not unlike that of Devonshire cream. It was a very colourable imitation, and not at all to be despised as a substitute for the genuine article. But its appearance, at which we had exclaimed, was a little against it. Whatever it may have looked like—and I am not sure it did not resemble a thickish paste of whiting and water—it certainly was not yellow and flaked, as often in England.

Ah! what memories seem to circle round the whole subject of Devonshire cream. Here is one more to be added to their number—cream bought by the Nile's banks, and eaten in a Cairone hotel. But the cream to which my thoughts turn in fond, weak moments is that rich nutty cream of the West, with just a suspicion of wood smoke to remind me that I am far from gas and coal.

E.

AN EXMOOR FOG, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

BY ALICE KING.

CHAPTER I.

"THAT be just like all you women-folk; if the sun shines on the moor they do wish for rain, and when it do freeze they do want snow; if a cow do have a red calf they do want a spotted one directly, if you do come home merry they'll sit down and cry like a pump, and if you be down about a storm falling on a field of prime hay, or anything the like of that, then they be as gigglety as a magpie. Now, here be you, Rhoda; most girls be a-calling out and a-begging and praying for husbands, till there be no peace with them morning, noon, and night, and you've got one a-put right into your hand, and you be making as much row as if he was a nettle. Did ever mortal man hear the likes of it?"

Such were the words of old Nathan Greenslade, my uncle, who, at the time of which I am writing, held a large farm on the border of Exmoor, and who was, both by birth and profession, a West Country farmer of the regular old-fashioned type. He spoke thus on a fine sunny afternoon early in September, and the person whom he addressed was myself, his niece, Rhoda Howe.

The occasion which drew the above ungallant words from my uncle's lips was the following:—

Uncle Nathan and his old friend, Mrs. Vickery, with whom he delighted to hint he had had, in his youth, certain very notable love passages, had taken into their heads, when she came to spend some days with us last Whitsuntide, to form a plan for marrying Mrs. Vickery's only son, Stephen, to me, Rhoda Howe, Farmer Greenslade's niece and housekeeper. Mistress Zillah Vickery, like the clever woman that she was, had insisted on the matter being kept secret from me till Stephen had come and tried upon me the attractions which, in the fond maternal estimation, he had for all female hearts. Nathan Greenslade had concealed the scheme closely enough for some time, though there had certainly been various portentous nods and winks on his part in my direction, which had at intervals, in the course of the summer filled me with wonder and vague misgiving. Now, however, when Stephen's visit was really at hand, a visit which he and Mrs. Vickery intended to be so all-important for my future, he had, suddenly one afternoon as he sat smoking his pipe on the garden bench in the sun, while I tended my flowers hard by, come blundering out with the whole truth.

No words can paint my astonished indignation as I listened. I had in me all that sturdy, resolute independence of character which marks West Country women; and the idea that I had been disposed of like a bullock or an Exmoor pony, without so much as my own opinion on the subject being asked, filled me with wrath inexpressible. Moreover, I had been at a fashionable school in Clifton, where I had learned French, dancing, music, and a pretty taste for English literature; and when I came home I had made up my mind fully and entirely and irrevocably that I would never—positively never—marry a farmer. The husband for me must be a man of intellect and feeling: a man who could appreciate Wagner, and read poetry, and who understood the meaning of the word "æsthetical." Whether I did myself, is more than I dare affirm: that was quite another matter; but my future husband must, that was certain and decided. As to what his profession in life was to be, this was a point on which I had no fixed convictions; I wavered very impartially between a curate and a soldier. But on one point I stood firm—he was not to be a farmer.

Thus it came to pass, that when this unexpected revelation came stumbling out of Uncle Nathan's mouth, between the clouds of smoke from his pipe, my offended majesty could not find ways strong and decisive enough to express its wrath. I flounced up and down the garden, sweeping the grass with my petticoats as if I had been a broom; I trod on the tail of Guard, the sheep-dog, who was sleeping peacefully in the sun, making him yell piteously; I flung all my gardening tools out into the road over the hedge with a resounding clatter, which made old Bet—our ancient hand-maid—thrust her head and cap out of a top window with a long Devonshire "Aw!" on her lips, and a look of unutterable reproach for my "goings on," as she would have phrased it, upon her face; I vowed loud and long that I had rather marry old Job, the aged, bedridden man down in the village, than Stephen Vickery; all of which tragical proceedings were the cause of the utmost delight and apparent edification to the two farm boys who were at work in the yard hard by, and who stood,

one balancing a spade on his head and the other tipping up a wheelbarrow, watching the scene in the garden over the low wall with the greatest, and most undisguised coolness and relish, as though the whole thing had been got up entirely for their behoof and amusement.

The stormy wrath of a young woman, on a September afternoon, cannot however last for ever, any more than a thunderstorm in June. I was compelled to grow calmer after a while, from the sheer want of being able to find any further ways of giving vent to my feelings. Hereupon Uncle Nathan, with most truly manly cowardice, instead of coming and trying to make it up with me, as I half meant him to have done, shuffled off and vanished in the cart-stable, muttering something about the 'old grey mare's off foot in front! a most vain and transparent subterfuge, for hadn't I seen Dolly, the grey mare, not half-an-hour ago, on her way in the cart to the harvest field, stepping as firm and straight as my grandmother did when she walked to her own wedding. As for myself I marched upstairs with the air of the ghost of an empress, passed Bet in the passage with a scornful toss, when she pounced down upon me with a "Well I never, Miss Rhoda!" and putting on my hat and mantle without so much as looking in the glass (I had been working in the garden in a sun-bonnet), went off to relieve my injured feelings by a long walk over the moor.

I was in such a state of misanthropical disgust towards Uncle Nathan, Stephen Vickery, Bet, the boys in the yard, and indeed the whole world in general, that I wished fervently it could have been the wilds of Africa I was wandering into, instead of those of Exmoor. I repeated lines from Browning and Tennyson as I went, some suitable to my situation, some (it must be confessed) forced into the service very unceremoniously, and, being quite out of sight of those hateful boys, paused now and then to gesticulate freely.

I was quite out on the moor now, and what a wondrous carpet I had under my feet—a carpet all woven of purple heather, and golden gorse, and stag's-horn moss, and the little white flowers of the dodder, each curiously embroidered, one into another, in richest and most intricate pattern! The breeze came bounding by, singing as it went brave sea-songs about the ocean, from which it had lately come; a bee went humming by me, gathering rare sweets from the heather; a black-cock rose, startled by my approach, and went whirring up on his glossy wings. A little way to the left lay a strip of emerald green, which looked like the ball-room of the fairies, and which would have tempted the unwary to go and tread its smooth surface; but I, the Exmoor-born maiden, knew well enough that it was a bog, and avoided it carefully. Much further away there were a cluster of shapes, which my experienced eye recognized at once to be a herd of red-deer feeding; all this I observed, but I was in such a downright, thorough bad humour with everybody and everything, that I was not pleased and interested, as I generally was when I took a walk across the moor, which, since my childish days, had always been a world of wonder and of beauty for me.

My great desire was to get as far as I could away from the farm and everything belonging to

it. I had a vague notion that I should like to be lost, and to cause great alarm and commotion at home, but I did not well see how I could carry out these kind intentions towards Uncle Nathan and his family.

On and on I wandered, when suddenly I became aware of two facts—I had at last succeeded in reaching a part of the moor which was not familiar to me, and the afternoon had suddenly changed with the rapidity peculiar to the hill-country and moorland of the west. The sun had disappeared, and a vast sea of mist was rolling towards me on every side. The opportunity for being lost had certainly come in good earnest, much sooner than I had expected, but now that it was come I did not know that I liked it particularly. I turned quickly in the direction in which I believed the farm to be, and hastened my steps; but speed as I might, the fog was more rapid in its movements than I was, and very soon I was so completely surrounded by it that I could see nothing save its impenetrable grey curtains, which hemmed me in like the folds of some huge tent.

I was always a girl of some courage and spirit, so I still endeavoured to make the best of it, and went forward slowly, but I certainly did not like my situation at all. Who could tell that I might not at any moment sink deep down in a bog, for I could not now distinguish green from any other colour? Who could tell the fog would not last till to-morrow morning, and what then? The further I went the thicker the mist seemed to grow, and the more uncomfortable my position became. I could hear the tinkle of a bell, which told me an Exmoor sheep was near me, but this was no consolation at all, for the sheep are at home on the moor alike in sunshine and mist, and they were cropping the heather just as contentedly and unconcernedly as if the air had been as clear as crystal round them; but, in spite of their own placidity of mind, they neither could nor would show me the way back to my uncle's farm.

Matters were getting worse and worse decidedly with me, when suddenly I became aware that there was a substantial object of some sort close in front of me. I put out my hand, and felt a rough stone wall. A thrill of joy passed through me, although but so lately I had desired so much to be lost. Had I reached the out-buildings of some farm? I felt my way round by the wall, and soon found a door. I entered, and quickly understood what the shelter was I had reached; it was one of the huts occasionally built by West-country farmers for their shepherds to spend part of their time in during the lambing season. This was no such very cheering discovery; still, it was better than nothing under the circumstances, and I resolved to remain in the hut at least for a while, till I saw whether the fog would lift.

I glanced around my place of refuge. There was a rickety little stool in one corner, and a broken brown pitcher in another, and a little heap of chopped wood in a third; there was a rude fireplace, which looked especially chill and grim. I sat down on the stool, and did not feel exactly cheerful.

The minutes passed by; my prospects did not brighten at all; the fog became, if possible, denser; the air blew in, heavy with dampness; the deserted hearth looked yet more forlorn. I

shivered in my thin print dress and little mantle, and felt very much inclined to cry, and did cry after a while, if truth must be told; but it was one comfort that those detested boys were not by to see and grin. Still, all the time there was a certain satisfaction in thinking of the terror they would all be in at the farm when I did not come back, and there was a dreary delight in picturing myself laid up in rheumatic fever, which would decidedly be the result of my present adventure.

CHAPTER II.

I HAD made up my mind that the rheumatic fever would terminate fatally, and had got as far as beginning to compose my own epitaph, which was to be in the same verse metre as the "In Memoriam," with a Byronic flavour about it, when I fancied I heard a step on the spongy heather outside the hut. I looked up with a start; there in the doorway stood, in truth, a tall figure. I was in a little flutter at first, he came so suddenly upon me, but it soon passed off as I gazed at him. He was a decidedly good-looking young man, dressed in a grey suit, with a railway rug on his arm. He was about to enter the hut, but when he saw me he drew back a little.

"I beg your pardon," he said, raising his hat and making a courteous little inclination with his head.

"Do you want to come in to take shelter from the fog?" I asked, quite reassured by his manner and appearance. "That is what I am doing myself; pray do not let me hinder you, you will not find any other place you can stop in; and, besides, you are sure to lose your way till the mist clears."

Thus invited he entered, and came and stood near me.

"I was walking from the station," he said, "and a woman at a cottage directed me to take a short cut across the moor; I think I should have hit it right, but the fog came on, and now I have completely lost my bearings. I came upon this hut, so I thought I would remain here till the mist grows less."

This was a simple, commonplace statement enough, and I ought to have been able to make a simple, commonplace reply of some sort to it; but really the eyes with which the stranger was looking at me were so handsome, that instead of being able to think of anything to say, I could think of nothing except how the damp of the fog had taken all the stiffness out of the white muslin trimming of my hat, and what a dishevelled appearance it must have, and how unbecoming it must be to me; I must be positively quite a fright. As this last terrible idea crossed my mind, I felt that my face was growing uncomfortably red, and this made it still more difficult for any remark to travel from my brains to my lips; I put my hand up to the brim of the luckless hat with an awkward, embarrassed movement, as though I imagined I might find a ready-made observation hanging upon it.

"Did you hear the sheep-bells tinkling as you came along?" I said at length, seizing desperately at the first shred of thought which rose up in my mind, and not waiting to consider that the ques-

tion was, to say the least of it, somewhat abrupt and remarkable.

A smile danced round his lips and went rippling all over his face, though he evidently endeavoured to keep it back for good manners' sake.

"Did you think the sound would cheer me in my troubles in the fog?" he asked.

"I don't quite know," I stammered, and became aware as I did so that my cheeks were growing a few shades more crimson.

"Well, these Exmoor mists are dispiriting things," he rejoined, not seeming to notice my confusion. "Do they come generally in this rapid way? I am new to this part of the country, and don't know the tricks and manners of the moor."

"But I ought to know them if any one does," I replied, gaining a little self-possession from his; "I was born on the border of the moor, and have spent most of my life close to it; still, though I am so familiar with it, I can never tell, nor can old men who have lived here seventy or eighty years, when a fog is coming on."

"I should fancy, from what you say, the moor must be an unpleasant neighbour," he said, smiling again.

"Oh, no, it isn't," I cried rather bluntly; "it's simply the most beautiful place in the world, when the heather and gorse are out as they are now, and the sun's shining."

"When," he repeated, with a comic little inflection of voice, and then added, "but I should say it might be also sometimes the dampest place in the world—this afternoon, for instance."

I saw he was making a mock of my beloved Exmoor, and my West Country dignity took fire in a moment.

"I'm sure there's often something pleasant even in an Exmoor fog," I exclaimed with a singular inaptness, it must be owned, under the circumstances.

"There never is any accounting for tastes, you know," he said, with another of those smiles of his which always gave the idea that a playful spirit woke up at intervals within him, and made a window of his face; "I should have fancied, however, that an Exmoor fog might be allowed to be at least a trifle damp, even by an admirer. Are you not shivering just a little? and wouldn't you like to have this wrapped around you?"

As he spoke he drew closer to me, holding out his rug, and as I made no resistance he threw it over my shoulders and disposed its folds comfortably around me. There was a genial kindness in his eyes and manner as he performed this little act of chivalrous courtesy, which once more drew me towards him, in spite of his disrespectful remarks, just now, with regard to Exmoor. He was, certainly, a remarkably good-looking man, and singularly well-mannered, just the opposite of what that horrid Stephen Vickery would be, a thought. Was he not—and now my heart gave I great throb—was he not exactly the man I had dreamt of—my hero, my prince, my husband? Had he not all the desired requirements? He was tall, he was dark, he had eyes that were as full of meaning as a book, he had a beautiful moustache, he was evidently a painter taking an artistic tour, and without the smallest doubt he would know how to interpret the word "æsthetical" like a dictionary. As these ideas went flashing confusedly through my mind, I grew so hot all at

once that I actually had the bad manners to fling off the rug he had just wrapped round me.

"Do you find my rug too heavy?" he asked, with a pleasant little laugh.

Those bright, quick eyes of his had been wandering round the hut as he spoke, and were now resting on the bits of chopped wood before mentioned.

"Let us light a fire," he went on, after a moment in which I said nothing; only fidgeted with the rug, as if I could not free myself from it, do what I would. "I have a box of matches in my pocket."

"Oh, that is a capital idea!" I cried: "I'll manage it."

Rising hastily from my seat, and delighted to have something to do, I gathered up some of the wood, and kneeling before the hearth, laid it in order, and applied one of his matches to it. The wood was damp, and burned sulkily; still, after some coaxing, through improvising a pair of bellows with my lips, it began to send forth a sullen, red glow. While I was thus employed I suppose my limp hat could not have been at all unbecoming to me, for, glancing up towards him as I knelt there in the flickering fire-light, his eyes were resting on me in a way that made me once more begin to blush.

"How late it must be getting," I said, turning my head towards the door to hide those tiresome, tell-tale cheeks of mine; "it is growing evening fast."

In truth, the increased gloom outside showed that night could not be very far off; the greyness of the fog was made yet greyer by twilight.

"How I should like a cup of tea!" I said, speaking out impulsively my mournful longing, as the picture rose up before me of the tea-table in the cosy parlour at home.

"Would a thimbleful of brandy-and-water do anything towards faintly supplying its place?" asked my companion.

Oh, all ye heroes and heroines of romance, imagine my painter offering me brandy-and-water! I was struck dumb at first with horror and surprise; then I said fractionally—

"I never touch a drop of brandy; I'd sooner take so much poison."

"But poisons are prescribed sometimes by the faculty," rejoined he, with most unruffled composure. "Take just a sip; I know it will do you good. You look as if you wanted it."

It was an awful situation, in truth, to be told by a young man with the eyes of a painter and poet in one, that I looked as if I wanted brandy-and-water; but there was such a genial light in his face as he spoke, and his attitude was so persuasive, as he held the little silver cup of his pocket-flask to my lips while I still knelt on the hearth; and, moreover, it was so indisputably true that I was growing every minute colder and more shivery, that, in spite of my late violent protestations, I drank the brandy-and-water quite submissively.

"Don't you feel better for it?" he asked.

"No, not a bit," I answered, most untruly and ungratefully.

Notwithstanding my discourtesy, however, his only response was a most incredulous smile, which would have made me feel inclined to slap him, if it had not been that, just then, I noticed he put the little dusk out of which I had drunk into his left

waistcoat-pocket, while that impertinent smile was followed by a very significant glance.

"Oh, I am so hot!" I exclaimed, jumping up and running outside the door; "it's all that horrid brandy."

Then I came back, and resumed my former seat on the stool, and he stood by the hearth, and we talked of many things in the gathering gloom, and I found out that, whether painter or not, he was a man full of quick wit and intelligence.

"I do declare the fog has cleared away!" he cried, breaking off suddenly.

So it had, with the rising of the moon, as is often the case in our west country, and with a rapidity peculiar also to my native moorlands. The outlines of some of the surrounding hills were already visible, and the mist was rolling away on either side, looking like a sea of silver.

"Shall we go?" he said.

"Yes," I answered sadly, for that little hut had grown a strangely dear place to me.

"I shall see you to within sight of your home," he said, as we passed out of the hut together. "I can find my way very well after to where I want to go. Take my arm; you are tired, I can see. It will help you a little."

Silently I accepted his offer, and silently we walked on, side by side, over the purple heather, beneath the magic of the moon, with the shining waves of mist eddying round us. Yes, I was tired, but, oh my heart, it was such a heavy weight to carry!

We had gone some distance in the direction of my uncle's farm, when we saw four figures advancing towards us, and, as they came closer, I recognized, in the now brilliant moonlight, Uncle Nathan, Bet, and the two farm boys. I was about to open my lips to speak, when my companion disengaged himself from my hand, which rested on his arm, and, going up to my uncle, said, to my astonishment—

"Well met, Mr. Greenslade; don't be surprised at my knowing you. I am familiar with your photograph, which my mother has; and I recognized your niece, too, in the same way, though she did not guess it. I am bringing her back to you quite safe. I am Stephen Vickery, your old friend's son."

"Aw!" said Uncle Nathan, winking at us knowingly; and "Aw!" said Bet, drawing out the word twice as long as my uncle, and making a most extraordinary grimace at us; and "Aw!" said those two dreadful boys, extending the word three times as long as Bet, and staring at us, with their great moon eyes, as if we had been King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in a travelling wax-works, and grinning at us as if we had been Punch and Judy. Oh, how inclined I did feel to shake them all! But the remarkable part of it was, I didn't feel the least inclination to shake Stephen Vickery.

And before Stephen went back to his farm in South Devon, I was, in truth, doing anything but shaking him; for, farmer though he was, and no poet or painter, he was holding me in his arms, and calling me his heather-bell, and his little wife; and when I asked him the meaning of the word "aesthetical," he said it meant nothing half so pretty as a pretty girl, and nothing half so good and sweet as a true woman's true love.

AT MIDNIGHT.

THE last time; do we say it? Ah, no need!
"It's cold and dark to-night," "Ay, dark indeed."

"Yet see, the moon would shine between the showers."

What trivial things we say in these last hours.

Good-bye, good-bye, one lingering word and kiss,
Oh, God! are all farewells as hard as this?
If so, and each is witnessed in the skies,
How sad this world must seem to angel's eyes.

Nay, but we cannot part; as soon divide
Sunlight from day, or check the flowing tide,
Drawn by the moon's weird smile across the sea,
As break the link that bindeth me and thee.

Joined hearts and souls, though severed hands
and lives,

For love like ours both time and change survives,
Though half the seas of earth should surge and
roar

Between thy breast and mine for evermore.

Yea, though my darkness should become thy light,
Thy spring my autumn, and thy day my night,
Yet soul to soul turned to a chord sublime
Shall still respond, and heart with heart beat
time.

Good-bye, good-bye, my voice is drowned in pain,
Oh, fierce and bitter are the wind and rain;
'Tis night, midnight—I scarce can see thy face—
'Tis our last look, last word, and last embrace.

Hark! the chimes bid thee stay no longer here;
Go now while I can bear it. See how clear
The flying moon shines in the Heaven above—
To-morrow, ah! to-morrow, oh my love!

A. J. M. L.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS OF HARTLE.

BY CHARLES KRUGER.

PART II.

NEXT Sunday morning was to see the "first time of asking."

Now all during this day and the evening of it, Miss Ellen Crewe had been enjoying pleasant anticipations of the morrow, and a few hours after this morrow had shifted that title on to its successor there arrived in the village of Hartle a young gentleman of some importance in this particular district; this importance was hereditary, the young man had been born with it, and it was made up of a name locally honoured, an estate locally extensive, and wealth which was partly locally disbursed. Frederick Marly had never done a day's hard work in his life and had no intention of trying; he had done nothing useful, beyond helping industry by his consumption of meat and drink and his wearing of clothing. He was not a brilliant young man, and his knowledge was not deep upon any subjects except those in which horses, dogs, or guns were concerned. But he was his father's son and had agreeable manners, so that commercial Hartle bowed respectfully

when it met young Marly, and labouring Hartle very humbly touched its hat brim as it passed. As this reverence had begun soon after Frederick had left his cradle, the young gentleman was now pretty well accustomed to it, and thought it only proper; it never occurred to him to ask himself what he had done to deserve it.

About noon on the day of his arrival, he was walking down the road from the village, and away past the school-house; he was going very leisurely until he saw Miss Crewe emerge into the road on her way to dinner, and then he quickened his pace until he was by her side. Now usually Ellen walked home in company with her mother, but on this occasion the sly young lady had found some excuse to hurry her parent off, whilst she waited a few minutes until the road was clear of teachers and scholars. Frederick Marly had little of the appearance usually associated with the heroic lover, nor did he really belong to that breed. Though not very tall, he walked with a slight stoop; and his legs moved with a doubtful grace. His hair was black, and his eyebrows being set low increased his dark look; the face was without any bright colour and was shaven.

"Good-day, Miss Crewe," he saluted as he reached her side, and spoke as though the meeting was not expected.

Ellen blushed as she answered. The girl was trembling slightly. She asked him if he had enjoyed himself whilst away from home; Ellen's idea being that absence from home must mean a pleasure trip.

"Pretty fair," he replied; "I've been doing Italy; the *pater* said I ought; but I was jolly glad to get back for the shooting. Besides I rather like Hartle!"

"Yes, you can have such a pleasant time in it."

"Oh, ye—es; it's often jolly; especially when we get a lot of fellows down. But I shouldn't like to live in a school-room in Hartle."

"Nor anywhere else."

"No; teaching youngsters must be a bore. Doesn't it make your head ache often?"

"Very often."

"I thought so. Reading used to do that with me, but I don't give it the chance now, for I don't read. I disappointed my dad when I was at college," Frederick remarked with a laugh, then added, as though to himself, "I expect to disappoint him more before I am done."

"May I call some day and have an introduction to your mother?" young Marly asked, as they got opposite the cottage.

Ellen blushed again and feigned to look doubtful. Of course, this little suggestion of a possible opposition was an incentive to Frederick.

"Do let me call"—as they shook hands.

"If you please—that is, if you wish."

And with an adieu Mr. Marly hurried back in the direction of the village.

When Ellen Crewe turned from her gentleman friend and was crossing the road she saw the girl, Dorothy of the brown face and hands, just turning the path and reentering the house; and when Ellen reached the doorway she saw that her mother and the girl ceased talking, as though she had been the subject. She could see that the dinner had waited a few minutes for her, and thought that no doubt Dorothy had in her domestic anxiety

gone to the gate to see if the late one was in sight. The maid was not the least garrulous of her tribe, and Ellen guessed that the intelligence had reached Mrs. Crewe without a second's delay. This was what the young teacher wished, and she resolved to make good the opportunity; so during dinner she spoke.

"Mother dear, you know young Mr. Marly."

"Not personally. Why?"

"I am acquainted with him, and he will insist upon making himself particularly attentive," said Ellen, as though she was inclined to remonstrate at the attention. "I met him just now and after walking down with me he asked if he might call and be made known to you."

"Didn't you tell him he might take his jokes elsewhere?"

"But he was not joking," the girl replied quickly.

Mrs. Crewe considered before saying more; then kindly but decisively: "Let Mr. Marly come if he wishes—which is scarcely likely; but don't let him talk nonsense to you."

Filial obedience taught Ellen to receive this admonition without question, but she mentally there and then resolved that she was old enough to judge and wise enough to act for herself. She believed that Frederick Marly was a great admirer of her, and her fondest hope and daily dream was that the admiration might become a stronger feeling and eventually bring about her alliance with the Marly family. And this was indeed a wild dream to dwell in the head of a little village teacher.

But now, whenever she stood before the mantel mirror in the little sitting-room and admired her own pretty face (a habit grown with the Marly ambition), she turned from the glass and, ceasing her smiles, would glare at the portrait of the bearded man.

The projected marriage between John Drake and Jane Crewe had, for at least six days, afforded excellent fuel for the gossips of Hartle—the "gossips" included quite four-fifths of the adult population—and the second publication of the banns had been declared by Mr. Holt that morning. The Crewes, mother and daughter, attended the church for evening service as usual. The elder gave a devotional attention; Ellen went through the forms whilst she industriously thought of worldly matters. Young Mr. Marly sat not far away from her, and used his eyes as though he had attended for the purpose of seeing Miss Crewe. Ellen, whose glances were casual and unconscious of course, noted this and rejoiced. It was only one of the many little things that had strengthened her hopes lately. Frederick Marly had visited the cottage and received an introduction to its mistress, and though he had said nothing definite, he had quietly shown his admiration for Ellen. Even the cautious mother had begun to think that the young man was really in earnest.

So the daughter sat in her place in the choir, and dreamt. Like all such visions the one she conjured was a pleasant one. Her imagination took her away from the choir, which, though eminently respectable, was not highly aristocratic, and it placed her almost beneath the pulpit, in the front and most favoured seats of the church, where the first and best families sat; for Hartle had

social degrees and barriers even in its way to salvation.

She thought of the possibility of some day holding a seat in that exclusive ground, with riches and honour to bless and cherish all the rest of her life; and what a triumph and gain this would all be to her. Frederick was not an ideal lover, certainly; but this worldly maiden would have given up the handsomest and cleverest man in the kingdom (a very hypothetical combination!) if he were poor, for the chance of becoming Mrs. Marly.

Her dreaming lasted on this occasion just an hour and a half, which is exactly the length of the service, and she only returned to her present self at the dismissal. Soon after she had slowly passed through the church porch she found sufficient cause for a thorough awakening, and for the rest of that day her hopes fled, and her fears returned.

Hartle was not lighted externally except by natural means, and when moon and stars were absent many of the people must go forth by night through darkness. It was dark enough on this Sabbath night, but the oil lamps of the porch threw some light near the door, and upon the immediate flagstones which made the path through the front patch of ground. Mrs. Crewe left the building a little in advance of her daughter, who had her mother in sight as she passed out of the radius of the light. As the congregation moved on, a man, who apparently had been standing near the door but just out of the light, joined them and walked with them, as though he had seen what he wished and was keeping some one within sight. As he merged into the crowd his face was seen by Ellen; and scarcely a more dreaded sight could there have been to her. She recognized him at a glance. It was the entertainer! The man who, though with a slightly older look, was so like the portrait of her father. She quickly determined to keep him in sight, and did so. He paid no attention to those around him, but only to one who walked on before. When Mrs. Crewe stood to bid good-night to some friends the man loitered, and Ellen in her turn stopped and watched. It was not easy work for both, for the night was dark; and they had to keep the view of the advancing figures, for if once lost to sight it would have been difficult to recognize them again.

Mrs. Crewe went to her cottage home, and when she had closed the little gate which stood in the hedgerow, the man who had followed looked searchingly at the house, then walked past, then stood nearly opposite for a while, and finally, after carefully noting the locality, returned to the village.

All this proceeding had been watched by Ellen Crewe, and the stranger passed her as he went back. But the girl turned and followed again, her nerves strained with excitement. She was a brave young creature, and reliant—a quality no doubt inherited from her mother; it could not be from her father. And she saw this itinerant entertainer pass into the village, and through it and away out into the country at the other side. This made her fear losing him before she had learnt something more. How far would he walk? Perhaps further than she could follow. But no; this disappointment was spared her; and after walking about a mile he started to come back to the village. The man had no suspicion of being

watched, and the girl was willing to risk discovery in the hope of knowing more. The gratification was not to be that night; for he turned into a public-house, and though Ellen even daringly walked about the road outside until she was ill and weary, she gained no further sight of him, and there was nothing left for her but to wait until perhaps very late or to return home. Homeward she went, and entered the cottage with a heavy heart.

Ellen entered her home without the usual brightness on her face, but with a grey and troubled look. Mr. Drake was there, chatting with Mrs. Crewe, and both were cheerful and happy; the girl heard their voices and quiet laughter, but kept away from them; for she could not bear to see their gladness while she knew what was hanging over them. She grieved for her mother, and grieved for herself, not for anything that had happened, but for what she feared might happen in the near future.

When the visitor had gone, and Dorothy had laid supper, Ellen went to the room where her mother still sat, and she made an excuse for her non-appearance sooner. The girl scarce spoke during the meal, but after it, when they were quite alone, she spoke, slowly, and coldly.

"Mother, I saw my father—the man whose picture hangs there—to-night."

Mrs. Crewe looked at her daughter with astonishment; but soon recovered herself, and said:

"That is scarcely possible, Ellen."

"I saw him as we were leaving church, he was standing near the outer door."

"But he died some years ago?"

"Are you sure of that?"

Jane Crewe was silent. The thought that her husband might still live had never before entered her mind; she had received a newspaper containing a paragraph which spoke of the sudden and violent death of John Crewe, and this authority she had never doubted. At one time such an expectation as her daughter's words might create would have been received with some joy; but now she trembled and turned pale; the suggestion was not a welcome one.

"I think you are mistaken, Ellen?"

"I hope I am."

This startled Mrs. Crewe most of all.

"You *hope* you are mistaken?"

"Yes. My father has done something of which you are ashamed to speak; I know that if he were here now he would be no credit to us. I don't wish him to come. I would rather know that he was in his grave."

"Ellen! hush!"

"Oh, I can't. I have spent hours of agony since I first saw this man in the village."

"When have you seen him?"

"First, some weeks ago, standing in the road outside the cottage, then to-night near the church, and he saw you and followed you down here——"

There was a loud knock at the door.

The women exchanged glances, and sat motionless, in almost breathless terror. The girl Dorothy, who slept at her mother's, had gone for the night, so it was for either Mrs. Crewe or her daughter to open the door, but neither stirred.

The knocking was repeated.

Jane Crewe rose hesitatingly, and turned as if

about to leave the room. Then Ellen quickly went across to her mother and held her arm, detaining her.

"Mother, don't open that door to-night! Let them stay outside, they have no right here!"

It was an anxious time, and the girl seemed to be able to decide with more confidence than the other; for Mrs. Crewe sat down again and commenced silently weeping.

The knocking went on again.

But in the cottage all was motionless. The mistress sat with her face buried within her hands; Ellen stood over her, with white face and the dark determined eyes flashing, as though defying an enemy. The stillness lasted a few seconds, but they seemed hours to the women. Then a man's step was heard receding, and then the wicket into the road sounded as it swung home again, and the visitor had departed.

Without breaking upon the silence, Ellen softly fastened the doors of the cottage, affectionately kissed her mother's tear-stained face, and then went to her room. Mrs. Crewe sat long in a reverie, and at last raised her eyes to the portrait on the wall; she rose and took down the picture and locked it in the drawer of a small cabinet. Then she, too, went to her own room. And very soon the schoolmistress's cottage was in darkness.

When Mrs. Crewe and Ellen met next morning both avoided any mention of the subject of the previous night. As they sat at breakfast a dark figure passed the window and there was an immediate knock at the door; and consequent great agitation in the women. They would have stopped Dorothy from answering, but were too late, for the girl was quick to open the latch. Mother and daughter sat in terror.

"Is your mistress in?"

"Yesser."

And the Reverend Mr. Holt walked in. He was a thick-set man, with thick hair and thick lips and large hands. Some said his head was thick too, but this was because he was ever firm in his opinions. He always set to work with a dogged determination, and generally gained his object even though met by strong opposition; as he did not shrink from creating or entering upon a warm contest in party questions he was often the means of imparting a little liveliness to village matters. And he could be a warm and considerate friend, as Mrs. Crewe well knew.

Mr. Holt bade them a good morning in his cheerfulest manner, and did not observe the pale faces which had met him.

"Excuse this very early visit. I called last evening—rather late perhaps—but could not see you."

What welcome relief these words brought! And it brought the colour back to the cheeks, too; and a pleasure that was so unexpected that neither mistress nor daughter could think what should be said. But the vicar continued:

"I should be glad if Miss Ellen would call upon Mrs. Holt before going to the school this morning."

Ellen answered that she would do so and made haste to be ready. There was nothing strange in this request, for the vicar's wife was often seized with sudden inspirations affecting the schools or their tutors or scholars, and she was always in a hurry to communicate the new ideas. Having

delivered the message, Mr. Holt wandered into the garden, and he was there when Miss Crewe started—with a lighter heart than she had known a few minutes before—and made her way to the vicarage.

When Ellen was fairly on the road, Mr. Holt re-entered the cottage, and with a serious face met Mrs. Crewe.

"I have something of importance to speak about, my dear old friend; pray sit down."

Jane's old fear returned, and she guessed at the subject. The vicar started in his usual decisive manner, as though he was beginning a duty from which no human power could turn him aside.

"Late last night—well, late for visits—a man called at my house and asked to see me, but did not give his name to the servant. I went into the hall to see who he was and what he wanted, and I never was more surprised in my life. It was some one we had long thought dead."

He paused and looked intently at his listener; but she was silent and dazed, and her complexion seemed to have suddenly turned grey.

"Can you guess who the man was? It was your husband—John Crewe."

But the tidings elicited no word of welcome, no sign of joy or even interest.

"He expressed sorrow for his sins," proceeded Mr. Holt in severe tones (the severity was against the man who was spoken of), "and he talked of wishing to make reparation to you. As a man I could have flogged him; as a minister it was my duty to help in his reformation—if that be possible."

Another pause, but still Jane did not speak.

"The man wishes to see you. I will deliver to him your answer, whether you grant an interview or not."

No reply—nothing but an irrepressible sigh.

"What will you do?"

"My duty!" Mrs. Crewe was more herself now, and she stood up, looking firm and brave. "I will do my duty," she said.

"And your duty is—what?"

"Mr. Holt, I must ask for your guidance there. Tell me what is right and I will do it."

"He is your husband."

"Yes," she said sorrowfully.

"Then your duty is plain—to keep the vow you made. For although he has broken the troth he plighted, that does not free you from your obligations. The law of man might set you free," said the vicar, as though arguing with his own thoughts, "but you must obey the highest—the Divine law."

"I will do whatever is right," was the meek reply.

"Then you will see him. I will tell him to come to-night. I hope his penitence is true, for I can guess the sacrifice his folly has caused you. If I can help him in any way, let me know. Good morning, and God bless you."

"Good morning; thank you, sir." And Mrs. Crewe almost smiled; she was trying very hard to bear her trials with resignation.

The vicar turned back. "You're a brave little woman," he said, "and you deserve to be happy. Keep a good heart."

It was easy to say "keep a good heart," but it was a hard task for Mrs. Crewe, and during that day she more than once bowed her head and wept

bitter tears; for she loved her farmer lover, and could never again love or honour the man who was her husband. When she thought more clearly she was glad of one thing—that John Crewe's existence had become known to her, for the knowledge would save her from contracting an unlawful marriage. At midday she gently but painfully told the news to her daughter, and Ellen received it with suppressed emotion. Then at night, soon after dusk had settled on the earth, the man came and feebly tapped at the cottage door. Dorothy had received her instructions, and she ushered him into the best room in the house, which was rarely used, and where a fire had just been lighted but was refusing to burn bright, as though even it had no welcome to offer.

The large lamp with the whitened glass which stood on the centre table gave only a dim light to the room, and Jane could scarcely see her husband's face when she entered. The greeting was cold on her part, uneasy on his.

"John, I was surprised to hear from you."

"Yes, Jane, I've been away a long while, haven't I? Likely enough you should not expect me." He spoke slowly and rather indistinctly.

"But I received news of your death."

"False report. I didn't die at all." Then he muttered: "Perhaps it would have been better if I had."

After a silence which seemed long, she asked, "Now you have come, do you intend to stay?"

"That is for you to say, Jane."

"You once decided that question without consulting me. Surely you can do so again."

"Yes," answered the man meekly, "I know I'm undeserving; I've been a brute, a fool. I'm not now though; I've altered; I have, Jane."

She stood silent and not looking at him, so he resumed, in an appealing tone: "Say a kind word to me. Tell me I'm forgiven."

"Stand back"—he was advancing—"and don't talk about forgiveness—please." She motioned him to be seated and then turned towards the door. "This is the house of your lawfully wedded wife, and I suppose it ought to be your home. Don't expect from me all the duty of a wife; you have lost all claim to it. Food and shelter are yours as long as you stay. And I will try not to hate you."

Then she quickly left the room; and almost immediately after the girl Dorothy entered and laid the table for a meal for Mr. John Crewe.

During this short interview Ellen Crewe was in the usual little parlour at the back of the house. Her manner was agitated and unquiet. The circumstance that had caused grief to her mother, caused rage in her. She clashed her teeth, and clasped her hands tightly, and stamped her foot in her impatience and vexation, and more than once muttered between her firm set jaws—"Oh, I could kill him."

When her mother came back from seeing the husband, Ellen turned passionately to her—"Does that man stay here?"

Mrs. Crewe did not speak in words; she answered her daughter with an imploring look. Ellen, as firm as ever, burst out again—"If he stays, I go."

"This is ungrateful"—poor Mrs. Crewe started this with passion, but soon gave way, and sat down as she burst into a flood of tears. "Ellen, you are my enemy in my trouble."

The girl really loved her mother, next to herself, and was softened. "No, I am not. But it is hard to bear." A pause, whilst she paced the room, and then another burst—"What will Frederick Marly think when he knows that this man—an itinerant conjurer, or perhaps worse—is my father?" This was the pinch that hurt Ellen the most. The presence of John Crewe would be a great blow to this girl's ambition. Then she tried to soften the avowal—"What will the village say?"

Now Mrs. Crewe was not strong-minded enough not to care what the village said; and the village was not likely to miss such an opportunity of speaking; but she was strong in the desire to do her duty, and this duty seemed to say—"Open the door to your husband."

Half an hour passed and the visible signs of grief had been wiped away, when Mrs. Crewe again went to the room where her husband sat.

"You will be lonely here," she said in a gentler tone, "will you come and see Ellen?"

He had been sitting gazing disconsolately at the fire which still burnt unwillingly. He was glad of this slight and further breaking of the ice, and rose and respectfully followed his wife to the back room. Here Ellen, who had not known her mother's intention, was taken by surprise; she had determined not to meet this man; but now they were face to face. John Crewe murmured a "how d'ye do?" which was more like a bashful salute to a strange lady than the meeting after long absence of a father and daughter. Ellen gave a chilling and slight inclination of the head, her features expressionless. She made a speedy escape and went up to the village and visited a friend.

(To be concluded next number.)

THE SACRED COLOUR.

FEW colours have obtained a wider popularity than blue. The lordly scarlet may have run it closely; but folk lore, and poetry, and general use, have combined to magnify this hue of the skies. Blue was early set apart as a sacred colour; though "scarlet and purple" mingled in the hues of Aaron's garments, "blue only" was to be the colour of the ephod which lay on his heart and of the laces which kept it there. We have heard this given as a reason for the "Blue Ribbon Army" selecting that hue as their badge. Indigo, as a pigment, was known to the ancients under the name of "indicum," and Pliny mentions the blue procured from the leaves of the woad, with which the Britons stained their bodies. The Egyptians, skilful in dyeing as in other useful arts, introduced varied hues into the decorations of their painted tombs and mummy cases, but the two favoured colours of red and blue chiefly predominate.

It was probably its costliness which exalted scarlet to the dignity of being considered the fitting wear for kings and nobles; but tradition still clung to blue as a sacred colour. It was always looked upon as the allegorical hue of hope. It is still the colour dedicated to the Virgin; blue and white being the orthodox array of children, "vouées au blanc," for the first seven years of their existence.

Blue has, however, some less agreeable associa-

tions connected with it. Gibbon has given a detailed account of the "faction fights" which disgraced the circuses of Rome and Constantinople, when the "greens and blues" strove for mastery. These colours, assumed by drivers of rival chariots in the races, were by some of the populace supposed to typify the earth and the sea; and a good harvest or a prosperous navigation were expected to follow the victory of the blue or the green. Ill feeling long existed between these rival charioteers; each colour was followed by a faction; and succeeding emperors increased the feud by enrolling themselves as members of one party or the other. In Constantinople the quarrel assumed far larger proportions, being intensified by religious differences. The Emperor Anastasius protected the "greens," Justinian favoured the "blues," and for years internecine war raged between the wearers of the rival colours. At the accession of Justin, a proclamation was issued which indirectly condemned the partiality of the previous reigns. "Ye blues, Justinian is no more; ye greens, he is still alive!"

Blue was assumed as the Whig colour after the Revolution; it is said to have been a favourite hue with the Scotch Covenanters of the seventeenth century. Blue and yellow were the colours in which the *Edinburgh Review* was bound; and the Prince Regent (when in opposition) linked the name of the party colour with that of his hostess when he gave the well-known toast—

True blue
And Mrs. Crews.

To which the lady responded—

True blue
And all of you.

Besides being used as a party colour, blue has been largely pressed into the service of charity. The "Blue-coat School" may be balanced by the "Red Maids" of Bristol, but the "blue gown," the Scotch licensed beggar, never had counterparts in scarlet. It is in "blue coats and badges" that the ideal "old courtier of the queen's," in the ballad, clothes his "twenty old fellows" of retainers.

A "blue-coated" serving man is frequently mentioned in old writings, blue appearing to have been a regular livery colour. On the other hand, a blue ribbon is the badge of our highest order of knighthood; the red ribbon of the Bath being, according to Horace Walpole, originally instituted "as a sort of bank to stave off the demands for the blue." And we speak of the "blue ribbon of the turf," and honour the colour of our "blue jackets" uniform.

It is by the poet and romancer, however, that blue is chiefly extolled. Could we poll all their works, we should certainly find blue-eyed heroines in the ascendant. A French proverb boldly declares that—

Les yeux blues,
Vont aux cieus
Les yeux noirs
Au purgatoire.

And without going as far as this, how often do poets (even of Southern climes, where the national type of beauty is of a brunette character) give to the subjects of their song "eyes like the sky." Blue-eyed and fair-haired were the British captives who excited the admiration of Pope Gregory, when

he beheld them in the slave market at Rome; and the sapphire eyes and golden locks of the Saxon women were proverbial.

English ballad writers often clothe their heroes in "Lincoln green," but Scotland has her "blue bonnets" celebrated in many a song. What romantic associations cling to the blue forget-me-not, while the blue speedwell is described as a magic flower in a folk lore legend.

Blue has its base associations as well as its poetical uses. We speak of being "in the blues" and of "looking blue," to indicate disagreeable conditions. "Drinking till all is blue" expresses a state of conviviality passing the limits of discretion. "Blue stocking" is used almost as a term of reproach. It is on blue paper that many unpleasant things are written. Taxes, rates, small tradesmen's bills are usually inscribed upon paper of a bluish shade. To an unsuccessful litigant disagreeable associations cling to the lawyer's blue bag. The very title "Admiral of the Blue," was degraded into a cant term for a tapster; so called from his wearing a blue apron

"As soon as customers begin to stir,
The Admiral of the Blue cries 'coming sir,'"
(Poor Robin, 1731.)

But it would be an endless task to enumerate all the common "blue" phrases. Modern science extracts dyes from substances unknown to our ancestors. Up to the time of Charles the Second, an act passed in the reign of Elizabeth forbade the use of indigo in dye-houses under the idea that it was a dangerous drug, and injured the cloth to which it was applied. "Prussian blue" was first made in 1710, by Diesbach, of Berlin. A blue dye is now obtained from coal-tar. An imitation of the costly, ancient ultramarine was produced in 1828 by M. Guimet. This beautiful colour was formerly made by pounding the blue mineral called lazulite (*lapis lazuli*) and cost about five guineas the ounce. The imitation was sold by the French chemist at sixty francs a pound. There is a story of a suspicious mediæval prior who employed a celebrated artist to paint the walls of his convent: the ultramarine required for the pictures to be supplied by the brotherhood. Mindful of its cost the prior not only doled it out in small quantities, but actually stood by while the artist worked, to see that none of the precious colour was abstracted. Provoked at this, the artist procured a vial of water, into which he repeatedly dipped the brush laden with ultramarine. In the course of a few days a store of the mineral deposit had fallen to bottom of the vial, unobserved by the prior, who was groaning at "the incredible amount of ultramarine the walls seemed to soak up." Having finished his task, the artist returned his spoil, with the remark that if a man was determined to be dishonest, it was almost impossible to circumvent him, while unjust suspicions merely irritated the faithful worker.

As yet botanists have failed to discover a blue and a yellow variety of the same flower; "blue roses" being the philosopher's stone of the florist. Blue flowers, however, abound in goodly amount, and poets have sung of the "hare-bell," and the "bluebell," and the "fairy flax," as of the "forget-me-not" itself.

The colour of the sky has never been a neglected one.

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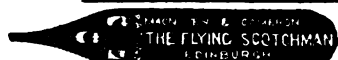
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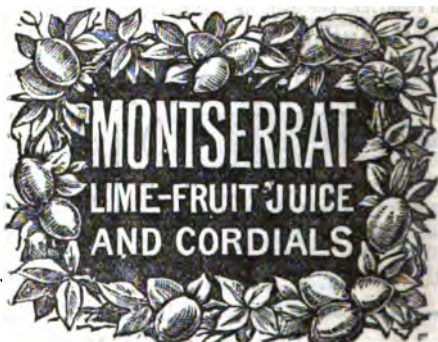
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EDITED BY F. W. ROBINSON.

VOL. II. No. 16.]

LONDON: APRIL 18, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A MONEY GRUBBER.

BY ANNETTE CALTHROP.

I.

"ARE you at home, Gerty?" said a brisk voice with an unmistakable American accent, as a bright-eyed, fair haired, elegantly dressed girl put her head, one January afternoon, into a private *salon* on the first floor of the Hotel Costanzi, Rome.

The room was square and lofty, with a stone floor—carpeted to suit the British taste—and with a painted ceiling, whereon cupids besported themselves among clouds, and true lovers' knots, and unmeaning decorative flourishes. For furniture, there was a round centre table, a cabinet, a cumbersome sofa, and half-a-dozen more or less comfortable chairs.

A young lady, seated near a porcelain stove, laid down a book which was in her hand, and rose slowly—perhaps a little reluctantly—to receive her visitor. But she had barely time to answer the somewhat superfluous question before the first speaker rattled on:

"I am real glad to find you in and alone. There is time enough for a good chat before starting for the Pincio—you are going to hear the band on the Pincio, I suppose?—and I am just dying to talk over this engagement of Maurice Chetwynd's. You are the very person to tell me all about it."

No shade of reciprocal pleasure at the prospect of rescuing a friend by dint of conversational art from a premature grave crossed the hostess's face. But she drew forward a chair and motioned to her companion to occupy it.

"You know, I guess, all that there is to tell about Maurice," she answered coldly. "He has just engaged himself to a Miss Ella Sedgeley, an English girl, who is staying in Rome."

The visitor sat down, laid aside muff and gloves,

took off a hat which a Parisian milliner had pronounced *ravissant*, passed an admonitory hand over certain rebellious curls falling over her forehead, and thrust out a dainty little foot to the stove.

"Yes; we heard that much when we returned last night from Florence. There are some Americans in our hotel who knew Maurice in New York, and they are boiling over with the news of his engagement. This Miss Sedgeley, according to their account, is the daughter of an English lord, but they have never seen her, and they couldn't even tell me whether she is pretty or how she wears her hair. 'Well,' I said to them, 'Maurice is going round in Europe with the Wintersetts, and I know Gerty Winterset well. I'll call on her to-morrow and make inquiries right away.' And here I am," the girl added, asserting a fairly self-evident fact. "I haven't," she went on, holding up a hand to screen her face from the glow of the stove, "spoken more than two words to Maurice Chetwynd in all my life, but I have always thought him one of the most interesting men in all New York. Do tell me all about Miss Sedgeley, Gerty."

Gerty—we beg her pardon, Miss Gertrude Winterset—did not at once respond to the comprehensive request. "I haven't much to tell," she said at last, a little sharply, "Miss Sedgeley is daughter of Lord Lockhurst, and is staying at the Angleterre with her father. Her mother and brother are to join her from Naples soon. She is fair and slight, and rather colourless; her manners are quiet and formal, and she speaks with the English intonation. I should call her very limited in her ideas—very English, and very limited."

Gertrude Winterset was a typical American girl, quick witted, self-reliant, and wonderfully pretty. She had a glorious mass of red-brown hair which she arranged in a thick coil on the top of her head; her large dark eyes were full of animation; and it would have been hard to find the smallest fault with her nose or mouth or dimpled chin. Resolution and energy had marked every feature

"You will be true to me?" he cried. "You will not let them change you?"

"Of course I will be true. Why, Maurice"—with a soft little laugh celebrating the detection of an absurdity on the part of her companion—"who should change me?"

"Holloa Ella!" called a merry voice.

An Englishman appeared on the balcony—a young handsome fellow, with a well-built figure, a vivacious face, fair curling hair, and a pair of laughing blue eyes.

"George, dear! You here!" cried Ella, in a delighted voice, holding out both her hands.

"As large as life. How are you, dear?" The young man stooped and kissed her. "This is Mr. Chetwynd, I suppose," he went on, turning to her companion with a genial smile.

The two men shook hands.

"Where do you spring from, George?" asked Ella, looking admiringly and lovingly into the new comer's bright face.

"From the Angleterre; we arrived there an hour ago. The mother is tired, and is resting at the hotel, but I heard where you and the governor were, and Woodrough and I came on to join you. By the way, we picked up Sir Philip Woodrough in Naples, and brought him to Rome with us. He is here."

"Sir Philip Woodrough in Naples! I had no idea that he was coming out to Italy. He didn't tell us so when we saw him last at Lockhurst." The expression on the speaker's face seemed to denote that the news was the reverse of pleasing to her.

Ella and her two companions left the balcony and reappeared in the crowded rooms. Alice Fairbanks, who happened to be then speaking to Gerty Winterset, observed their entrance.

"That's Mr. Sedgeley," she said, looking across the room towards George. "I heard him announced; he came with a Sir Philip Somebody. And, do you know, Gerty, I don't a bit believe that Miss Sedgeley will ever play Maurice false. She looks as good as gold."

Gerty smiled rather an irritating smile, suggestive of complacent belief in the superior quality of her powers of penetration.

Miss Winterset's prophecy was nearer fulfilment than she herself had dreamed. Only three days after the reception at the American Embassy, Chetwynd received from Lord Lockhurst a letter which gave the death blow to his dearest hopes. His lordship, in roundabout but intelligible phraseology, demanded the dissolution of his daughter's engagement. This demand, following so closely on his acceptance of Chetwynd as a suitor, naturally required explanation and apology. Lord Lockhurst deigned to assure Chetwynd of his high personal consideration. It was, he intimated, the misfortune, rather than the fault, of the Sedgeleys, that, on account of their deplorable poverty, an alliance between themselves and the Chetwynds was impossible. Blinded by his daughter's "very natural" wishes, he had not at first recognised the impossibility; he deeply regretted that he had been the means of strengthening hopes which could never be realised. Truer discernment had come to him now. He had at length faithfully set before his daughter the fact of her entire lack of fortune, and she was determined not to impose upon Chetwynd by

continued encouragement of his flattering addresses.

It was not, however, without regret that she cancelled her engagement, and she entertained the sincerest wishes for his happiness in life. Under the circumstances, she had engaged herself to Sir Philip Woodrough, who had done her the honour to make proposals for her hand.

When he received the letter, Chetwynd was seated in the *salon*, which he shared with the Wintersets, in the Hotel Costanzi. It was early morning. Mr. and Mrs. Winterset with the zeal of true Protestant tourists in Rome, had gone off betimes to the church of *Sta. Agnese fuori le mure*, where the annual ceremony of blessing two lambs, whose wool would afterwards be used for the *pallium* of the Pope, was that day—the 21st of January—to take place. Gerty had "concluded" not to attend the service, but to remain in the hotel; she sat knitting a sock, with fast flying needles, near the stove; and Chetwynd, a still unemptied coffee cup by his side, had been reading to her scraps from a *New York Herald*, before setting off to pay his daily morning visit to the Angleterre. He had not seen Ella on the previous day; the Lockhursts and their guest, Sir Philip Woodrough had started early for Tivoli, and had not returned till late at night; Chetwynd, somewhat to his chagrin, had received no invitation to join the excursion.

The letter fell from the reader's hand. Gerty, turning her eyes towards Chetwynd, saw an ashen shade come over his face. But he sat quite silent, passing his hand, in dazed fashion, over his eyes.

"Have you bad news, Maurice?" Gerty ventured to ask; she received no reply.

Engaged! Engaged to Sir Philip Woodrough! Chetwynd was turning the words over and over in his mind, in a vain attempt to grasp their meaning.

A more contemptible effusion than Lord Lockhurst's letter, with its weak attempt to conceal baseness under the cover of counterfeit courtesy, Chetwynd had never read. Some strong influence must have been brought to bear upon the writer, who had hitherto enjoyed, and had apparently deserved, the character of a straightforward English gentleman. But it was not on Lord Lockhurst and his amenability to influence, but on Ella, that Chetwynd endeavoured to concentrate his bewildered thoughts. Was Ella false to him? false, and mercenary, and indelicate? Could it be that she had sold her hand, already promised to himself, to a higher bidder? He recalled the earnest look in her sweet eyes, when, only three short evenings ago, she had laughed to scorn his momentary doubt of her constancy. He would go to his darling, and demand an interview; he would not believe in her perfidy till he heard its confirmation from her own lips.

As Chetwynd passed out of the hotel, into the sunlight, the sudden glare seemed to stupify him. Gerty, watching from an open window, saw him stagger as he walked, like a man stunned by an unexpected blow. He met an acquaintance, and forgot to make any sign of recognition, then, struck by a sudden thought, ran after and accosted him. The acquaintance was an English resident in Rome, an authority on Anglo-Roman gossip.

"I beg your pardon; I didn't know you for the

moment," said Chetwynd. He began a conversation, on indifferent topics, and, presently, taking the Englishman by the button hole, asked, in a tone of affected carelessness, "By-the-by, can you tell me—you who know everyone—anything of Sir Philip Woodrough, who is now at the Angleterre?"

"Woodrough?—to be sure. What do you want to hear about him? I know him as well as I know"—looking around for a simile—"the Church of Santa Susanna over there—and better. He belongs to the Warwickshire Woodroughs, is a baronet, and a very lucky fellow into the bargain. Why"—pausing between each adjective—"he is young, good-looking, and beastly rich."

Beastly rich! Miss Winterset had been accurate in her quotation of English slang.

With the exchange of a few civilities, the two acquaintances parted.

Half-an-hour later, after a colloquy, in which the American gave full expression to his indignation, and in which his lordship bore an embarrassed, self-condemnatory part—Chetwynd was standing alone with Ella in the Lockhurst's sitting-room in the Hotel d'Angleterre. It was a cheerful little room, and, spite of stone floor, painted ceiling and porcelain stove, had been invested with an almost English character by its English occupants. With that common and strange tendency which the mind has, in times of deepest sorrow, to be most acutely conscious of trifles, Chetwynd observed more narrowly than he had ever observed before, familiar objects in the familiar room—the English newspapers and magazines, the English photographs and flower vases, and workbasket and afternoon tea equipage. Ella stood before him, pale and heavy-eyed, but perfectly composed; not a trace of the shamefacedness which had characterised her father was visible in herself. Somehow, as Chetwynd looked at her, the heat of his indignation cooled; heavy on his heart sank the conviction that, when the present interview was over, he should never, in this world, see his love again.

"Have I deserved this treatment at your hands?" he asked in a broken voice.

Ella looked at him steadily. "No," she answered. "You have deserved nothing at my hands but love and faith."

"And yet you break with me utterly?"

"Yes," the girl said faintly; "I must break with you utterly."

"Because a richer man than I has asked you to be his wife?"

Ella flinched; her lips trembled. But she received the question without verbal protest—in absolute silence.

Chetwynd was standing near a French window, overlooking the street. To this day he can recall the passers-by—a Franciscan monk, an artist's model, a priest, some peasants and middle-class Romans, and a little company of German students from the Propaganda College. He saw them all half-unconsciously, as a man sees objects in a dream. But even now, after the lapse of years, the scene comes back to him sometimes; he sees the sun shining gaily upon the Roman street—the Bocca di Leone—touching with gold the brown habit of the monk and flaring down on the red cassocks of the German students.

At length Chetwynd turned to Ella.

"Do you know what you are doing?" he asked suddenly. "I say nothing of myself, or of the solitary future to which you doom me. But do you know that society—even your own English society—will cry 'Shame!' on conduct so openly and obviously mercenary as this of yours?"

"Yes, I know," the girl replied sadly. "But that has not troubled me—not the most. I can bear all that. I have"—after a pause, during which she nervously folded and unfolded her hands—"been troubled most of all by the thought of you, Maurice."

At the sound of his Christian name softly spoken, Chetwynd made an involuntary movement towards the speaker. Ella went on, hurrying over her words now as though she feared that with delay her utterance might prove impossible. "I know that you are sorry about—this—this—change in our prospects. You will be very sorry just at first. But in time I hope"—the brave voice trembled—"that you will forget me and be happy."

"Ella," Chetwynd had drawn very near the girl, "why have you been so readily influenced against your better self? I know, I am sure, that you are not acting of your own free will. A hundred times you have told me that you cared nothing for money, that you could be happy in the unpretending home which it was in my power to offer you. How often I have dreamed of that home away in the New World! Child," the passion in the pleading voice thrilled the listening girl, "why will you wreck my happiness and your own? Be true to your own heart—to—"

Ella broke away with a cry as of physical pain, "Oh, leave me," she implored. "You mistake altogether. No one has unduly influenced me. My engagement to Sir Philip Woodrough is—is—a matter of my own free will."

There was silence.

"I cannot ask you to think of me at my best," Ella went on presently. "I know that when you remember me you can only do so with scorn as the most fickle, the most self-seeking of—" Her voice died away.

Chetwynd scanned her face intently, scanned it, as he knew, for the last time. "You hoped that I should forget you," he said. "I will try. It will be hard work, but I will try. I have loved you very dearly; no man will ever love you more dearly. This evening I shall leave Rome; I will return without delay to America. We shall never—meet again."

Without a touch of her hand, without a word of farewell, as without a word of reproach, Chetwynd passed out of the room and was gone.

Ella heard the door close behind him, heard his footsteps echo down the stairs. Then her enforced composure gave way; her head fell on her hands; her tears came like rain. "Never meet again! Never meet again!" she sobbed. "Oh, how shall I bear it! Maurice, come back to me—Maurice, my love!"

II.

FIVE years have passed since the day when Maurice Chetwynd parted from Ella in Rome.

It was a lovely June evening. At Lockhurst long shadows were creeping across the lawns;

a certain mystery and poetry were lent to the house—a well preserved old Elizabethan structure—by the soft, golden, everchanging, evening light.

Within the house was a strange hush. No sound of voices was heard; servants, passing hither and thither on accustomed errands, moved with stealthy treads.

In an upper room overlooking a lawn sloping down to a pond overshadowed by chestnuts, a young man, the heir of the house, our acquaintance, George Sedgeley, lay dying. His handsome face was worn and wasted; all the merriment had gone out of his blue eyes which gazed wistfully through the window at the stirring of the chestnut branches in the breeze.

"Ella," he called, in a weak voice.

In a moment a cool hand was laid on his, and a gentle face bent over him.

"What is it, dear?"

Time had wrought little outward change on Ella Woodrough since we knew her as Ella Sedgeley in Rome. It was only after narrow scrutiny of her sweet face that one observed, or fancied that one observed, in the set lips and soft grey eyes tokens of a newly acquired, or newly developed, power of self-repression.

"I was dreaming just now," went on the unsteady voice, "that you and I were children again here at Lockhurst. I was rowing you upon the pond. It was spring; the birds sang in the trees, and the sun shone upon the water. Your hands were full of chestnut blossoms; you laughed, and we sang together scraps of our old songs. All at once—I don't know how—the boat capsized; we were both in the water. Then, suddenly, the sun went down; it was dark as night—pitch dark, and cold, and silent—silent as death. And—"

"It was only a dream, dear," said Ella, in a caressing voice, such as might be employed to soothe an ailing child.

"Yes, it was a dream. But since I awoke I cannot rest. I have been constantly thinking of you, Ella. You have been the best of sisters to me always."

"And you have been the dearest of brothers."

George shook his head in token of dissent. A dejected look was in the eyes, which turned from Ella as if in shame, and glanced again towards the outdoor scene.

"My mind dwells," he said mournfully, "on the old time in Rome, when I was the means of separating you and Maurice Chetwynd."

A quick change passed over Ella's face.

"Hush, George," she said hastily. "That time is all over and done with now."

The means of separating you and Maurice Chetwynd!

Easy-going, impulsive, the possessor of expensive tastes, and of inadequate means for their gratification, young Sedgeley had passed his college days in ever-increasing pecuniary embarrassment. But when, after a few weeks of Continental travel—during which he had, in the company of a friend, Sir Philip Woodrough, made the acquaintance of a notorious gaming-table—he joined his father and sister in Rome, the shadow of a disgrace far deeper than that incurred by debt had fallen upon him. A certain cheque, which had been signed in Sir Philip Woodrough's name, for a large amount, and for

which payment had been obtained, was discovered to be a forgery; a chain of circumstances pointed to George Sedgeley as the forger. Sir Philip communicated his suspicion to Lord Lockhurst, and threatened exposure. Only on one condition would he consent to withdraw the threat; the condition was that Ella Sedgeley, to whom he had long paid addresses, but who had hitherto rejected them, should consent to become his wife. In this strait, Lord Lockhurst appealed to his daughter to save her family from open disgrace; and he did not appeal in vain. Of the cost of compliance Ella said nothing. Whatever blame might attach to the "artificial" English mode of education, of which Miss Gertrude Winterset thought slightly, it had at least taught one recipient the art of dignified self-control. To shield her brother's good name, to preserve the reputation of an old, esteemed family, Ella consented to forego the best happiness of her life, and she did so without comment on the greatness of the sacrifice. She recognized all that the sacrifice involved. She knew that she must not only lose Maurice, but—a harder matter still—that she must forfeit his esteem. In his eyes, and in the eyes of all for whose good opinion she cared, she must appear despicably false and mercenary. Knowing all the weight of her burden, she took it up bravely. Years had passed on, and her courage had not failed. Very simply and gracefully she held her place in society as Lady Woodrough, and at home she set herself, casting old memories behind her, to the worthy fulfilment of her daily duties. The poetry, as she sometimes told herself, had gone out of her life when the Roman idyll reached its latest stanza; but to the unpromising material of a prosaic existence she was quietly, unobtrusively giving heroic shape. The heroism was all the truer for its complete unconsciousness.

With the news of George's illness, Ella's passionate love for her brother—a love which had narrowly survived a serious shock—came back in all its intensity. If she thought at all of the injury which he had done her, she attributed it to weakness of character rather than deliberate wickedness, and she forgave it unreservedly. She recalled the dear old childish days when George had been her hero. How happy was that unforgetten time—how bright with the light of innocence and love!

"The time in Rome is all over and done with," Ella had said in her re-assuring voice.

"No; it is not all over; the consequences remain. I have"—with a long sigh—"ruined the happiness of a life."

Ella paused a moment. The subject was a painful one to her, but she would not, under the circumstances, shrink from its discussion.

"I have good news for you," she said softly. "The news has made me very glad, for I feared once what—what—you fear now. Only last week I heard that—that—Mr. Chetwynd"—the speaker hesitated a little over a name which she had not audibly pronounced for five years—"had been lately married to an American lady, a Miss Gertrude Winterset. I knew Miss Winterset in Rome; I have every reason to believe that she is really attached to Mr. Chetwynd, that she will make him an excellent wife, and that a happy future is in store for him. So you see, dear,"

taking George's hand tenderly in hers, "your self-reproaches were groundless; you have *not* ruined the happiness of a life."

George looked at his sister with wide-open, wondering eyes.

"It wasn't of *Chetwynd* that I was thinking," he said bluntly. Ella's self-forgetfulness filled him with remorseful reverence. It seemed strange to him that she should find her strongest consolation in the thought that her lover had lived down his affection for her. George had never been an extensive reader of the poets, or he might have remembered lines in that noblest, surely, of Shakespeare's sonnets—

for I love you so,
That I, in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.

"I was remembering your own life and the sorrow I brought into it," he said sadly.

The blood mounted into Ella's pale face. To the loyal little soul acceptance of pity for her lot seemed like treachery to her husband.

"You must not grieve on my account," she said stoutly. "Philip is very kind to me always. I have no cause for complaint."

There was silence. Darkness had fallen. A servant appeared with lights. Curtains were drawn and windows closed. Night came on—a short, fragrant summer night—the last night of George Sedgely's life.

Just before dawn, a sudden change took place in the sick man's condition. The household was hastily summoned; a little company gathered round the sick-bed.

But the dying man seemed conscious of only one presence—that of Ella. His eyes turned wistfully to hers; he tried to reach her hand; his lips moved feebly. She bent her head down to his; a speechless awe was on her face.

"You" the voice came in thick gasps—"forgive me, Ella?"

"With all my heart."

A solemn stillness pervaded the room. Only the slow ticking of a clock was heard, as the minutes passed on, and as the cold grey light of morning poured in through the window. Ella bent still lower; her lips were close to the dying man's ear.

"Can you remember—will you repeat—some words of prayer?" she said.

Yes, he can remember. In fancy, he is transported to a grey old country church. It is a drowsy summer afternoon. The great west door is open; the sunlight lies bright on the worn stone pavement. He is a boy again, seated with Ella in a roomy square chancel pew. He sees the high pews, with their moth eaten faded green cushions, sees the tall pulpit and the reading desk, and the cracked stained tablets on the walls, sees the choir and the school children, and the rustic congregation. The clergyman, standing at the reading desk, reads a story of far off days, in old Jerusalem—a story of two men who went into the Temple to pray, and of one who returned to his home "justified rather than the other."

The lesson is over; the music of the *Nunc Dimittis* fills the church. But above the notes of the organ, above the singing voices, these words echo in George Sedgely's ear: "I tell you that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other—justified rather than the other."

He folds his hands in the old childish sign of prayer; he raises his eyes. The scene in the church fades; he is a child still; it is night, and he is very weary. "Shall I say my prayers now, mother?" he asks faintly.

It was Ella's voice that answered, "Yes." With the sound of her voice, full consciousness of his surroundings came like a flash to the dying man. With the publican's cry—the cry of him who went from the Temple "justified"—upon his lips, with a sudden light breaking over his face, George Sedgely passed away.

"The English," said Gerty Chetwynd one day, to an acquaintance, a rare individual enough, inasmuch as he was an untravelled and scantily read American, "are a nation of money grubbers. Their noble families profess to despise riches, and to look down upon our 'aristocracy of dollars,' but the pursuit of money is, in reality, the one aim of all their lives." Mrs. Chetwynd had fallen, spite of the keenness of her wits, into the too common error of imputing to a whole community a fault which she had discovered—or fancied that she had discovered—in an individual; her auditor who, notwithstanding his lack of experience and of book learning, possessed the "cuteness" of his nation, received the obviously too sweeping statement with a secret feeling of superior enlightenment. The typical individual in Mrs. Chetwynd's mind was, needless to say, Ella Woodrough. Ella would have heard the imputation without resentment—certainly without any attempt at self-defence. George's name is free from dishonour; she finds happiness in the thought that that freedom is the fruit of her own willingness to accept unmerited blame. She can bear misrepresentation cheerfully, as she has borne loss of friends and of love, courageously for George's sake.

THE TWO WORLDS.

BY COULSON KERNAHAN.

IN the streets of the city amid the throng,
Lazily lounging I lingered long.

With a rattling, clattering, jingling din
The waves of traffic came rolling in;
Carriage and cab, trolley and van,
Gallop horse, and hurrying man,
Came and vanished with busy air,
I was the only loiterer there.

Idly turning my fancies o'er,
Passing a church, the pond'rous door
Backward swung a moment or more;
And there fell on mine ear, like a thankful sigh,
A solemn Amen, then the organ's roll,
And the song of praise like a ransom'd soul
Upward soared to the far-off sky.
The door was shut, and I passed elsewhere,
Passed through the hustling, bustling throng
But still in my heart I was present there,
And knelt with the worshippers bowed in prayer;
And that grand Amen, and the organ's song
Rang in mine ears as I moved along.

And musing thus, I said in my mind:
There are two worlds round us, but we are blind
Always to one. In the gaudy day
The stars and their glory seem passed away.

They dull and dim in the dawning drear,
With the thoughts they woke, and the longings
high.

And God draws back, and the world draws near,
And we grasp and grope 'neath a starless sky.
But when the sun in the west is lain,
And the cloud-flowers fair on his shrine are flung,
Like immortal spirits they rise again,
God's golden worlds in Eternity hung.

To-day I moved in a world of strife,
In the task, and the toil, and the tumult of
life;

No time for dreaming of Song and Art:
The paths of duty before us rise,
And he who refuses to bear his part
In the heat of day, and murmuring cries
For the twilight world and the star-lit skies,
Knows not the glory that in them lies!

Task, and tumult, and toil are done,
And day is dying: low looms the sun,
As a fallen knight in the blood-stained west,
With cloud-flowers strewn on his pierced breast;
And, ghost-like, there in the gathering gloom,
Pale Hesper floats o'er his silent tomb.

'Mid moonbeam glimmer I dream and roam
In a Spirit-World: from a cloud-wrapt home
Float wafted whispers, aerial, free,
Like the measured moan of a murmur'ing sea;
And my heart is thrilled, for the air is filled
With mystic music, as song of birds;
And o'er my soul, like far-off roll
Of mighty waters, I hear the words
Of the noble Dead; and before me spread
The glitt'ring peaks of a distant land,
As they glow and gleam in the balmy beam
Of a cloudless moon; and in peace I stand,
A spirit bright, in its robe of white,
A shining soul on the golden strand.

LATCHKEYS.

BY LEOPOLD WAGNER.

SOME ONE or other has very aptly defined a latchkey as "a modern profligate invention;" and there is no doubt that in the opinion of fiery, pleasure-loving youth, the possession of such an instrument for exclusive personal use constitutes one of the strongest marks of domestic independence and emancipation from parental restraint to be imagined. Time was when the tender stripling evinced an inconceivable delight in being freed from the trammels of his petticoat attire to step into a costume (replete with pockets too!) in imitation of his father's, and from a questionably sexed infant he at once aspired to be a man. But the childish fascinations of being "breeched" are nothing compared with the consciousness of enjoying an absolute freedom of movement out of doors, and asserting yourself as a man of the world, able and eager to take good care of yourself without question or reproach. Nevertheless such a condition is not always to be commanded beneath the parental roof. "However much you may be indulged at home," observes a distinguished writer, "it is impossible to break

the chain of childish associations, it is impossible to escape from the feeling of dependence and the habit of submission. Charming hour when you first order your own carriage and ride your own horse, instead of your father's. It is delightful even to kick about your own furniture, and there is something manly and magnanimous in paying your own taxes." It may be taken for granted, then, that in the very best regulated families the eldest son and heir is least of all allowed the use of that admirable little pocket invention which might enable him to slip into the house at unseasonable hours, unheard, unseen, and altogether usurping the authority of his moral superiors. So that practically, to become his own master, and to shape his recreations according to his own tastes, he must set up a separate establishment, and thus he becomes the happy possessor of a latchkey. From this standpoint he need no longer remain in fear of missing the last bus or train; he will be at full liberty to visit theatres, operas, concerts, balls, and parties; and even if he lingers at a boon companion's club until the small hours of the morning, dire visions of a sleepy parent awaiting his knock, or perhaps aroused from his first sweet dream to greet him with expostulations, need haunt his imagination no more.

We have, we believe, no record as to the inventor of the latchkey, though countless originators of far less useful contrivances have ere this merited fame, a monument, and, let us add, starvation. And yet whoever that inventor was, he has a great deal to answer for. By the introduction of the family latch, locks, bolts, bars, and chains are alike ignored; and the safety of an entire household and the property stored beneath each roof are placed entirely at the mercy of the holder of the corresponding key—whether he be a belated husband, a reckless lodger, or a burglar. Sometimes the lawful resident, on reaching home after a night's jollification, unconsciously neglects to see that the latch catches properly in the door-post, in consequence of which a chance member of the nimble brotherhood may easily gain ingress, to help himself to whatever he chooses to select below stairs. Or the key may be left in the latch on the outside, requiring no more than a single turn on the part of a suspicious intruder on a similar errand. Policemen have ere this appeared in ghostly array, and by the lurid glare of a ball-eye, at the bedside of householders through such omissions. Some years ago, however, fatal results overtook the custodian of the public safety in one of these offices, for on arousing the sleeper he was himself mistaken for a burglar, and received the contents of a loaded revolver in his body. Naturally it should form the business of every household to secure his front door before retiring to bed. But when there are others beneath the same roof who claim the privilege of a latchkey, double-locks and bolts are quite out of question. The understanding then generally is for the last man in, guided by the absence of the proper number of candlesticks on the hall table, to fasten the street door behind him. Yet this candlestick arrangement is not always to be relied upon; and a fellow-lodger may be left out at dead of night, shivering in the cold or drenched in the rain, impatiently probing the refractory latch with its properly fitted key, and accompanying his efforts with unquotable language in vain. At times too

the bottom bolt may be kicked into the door-post by mistake with similar results. Or the error may rest wholly on the part of the victim. A continued inattention to the working order of his latchkey renders the tube liable to be stuffed up with the woolly contents of a dirty pocket, when sooner or later it fails to effect its purpose, and even refuses to be thrust into the latch at any price. In other connections, the consequences arising from the mislaying or misappropriation of a latchkey are innumerable. The benighted lodger has perhaps returned to his apartments during the early part of the evening to prepare for the theatre or a party, nor until reaching his door considerably after midnight does he discover that he has left his keys on the dressing-table or in one of the pockets of the suit he has so recently cast off. In such a dilemma he is prone to startle the whole neighbourhood by his furious ringing of the bell, and knocking, hammering, and banging at the door, until he succeeds, half an hour afterwards, in arousing one of the slumbering mortals overhead to a sense of his situation.

As ordinarily understood, latchkeys are always matched to a particular latch, so that, save by means of a duplicate, no other key should succeed in fitting that latch for an unlawful purpose. But such is not always the case, and it often happens that the same latchkey might afford admission to an entire row of similarly built houses in the same street. The mischiefs of such a flagrant mistake are at once apparent. As is well-known, the whole plot of the successful story of "Called Back" hinges upon the blind hero finding himself in a strange house through the conveniently fitting propensities of his latchkey. Many curious and diverting stories in this regard might be told. A friend of the writer's—an actor—once retired to his lodgings late after a hard night's performance, ascended to his chamber, went to bed, slept soundly, and arose the next morning as usual. He was however, struck, on drawing up the window-blind, to note that the well-known signboard of his opposite neighbour was no longer conspicuous, but had been removed several doors' distance up the street. This little incident caused him to reflect, and on looking around him, he discovered to his consternation that he had let himself into a strange house, slept in a strange bed, and made use of all the accessories of a strange toilet-table, in consequence of his latchkey having fitted the door of a similarly constructed house in the same block as his own lodgings. A kindred misadventure happening to another acquaintance, was attended not very long ago with even more embarrassing results.

There is still another aspect to be considered about latchkeys. Forgetful lodgers have been known, when removing to new apartments, to retain possession of their late latchkeys, where-with they might as like as not, on the very first night, walk back to their old lodgings and let themselves in, to quarrel with the new occupant of their lately vacated chamber, and so stand in dread of being summarily handed over to the police as a midnight marauder. To such we can only tender this parting advice—when taking leave of your lodgings, don't forget to deliver up your latchkey.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT.

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER II.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

THE life of castaways on a desert island is ordinarily monotonous in its misery, and the accounts of sufferings in actual shipwrecks are as brief as they are significant. One day resembles another; one misery is like the last; a few paragraphs are all that can be written to represent days or weeks of suffering; little food, no fuel, no shelter, describes often enough in six words a condition which lasts through endless hours and culminates in death.

In after years Agnes could tell but little of her experience on the island; it was horrible; she was wretched; she thought continually of those at home, and Henry Dilworth was kind to her. That was the brief substance of a long endurance.

The good ship *Swan* was reckoned after a time among the "missing with all hands."

There were mourners in Australia and mourners in England. Black dresses and crape were worn in the valley of Elmdale. Agnes and Kate were wept for as among the early dead.

But all the while on her desert island Agnes clung passionately to life, protesting more and more as time went on against the possible end of the suffering, feeling herself shut out in her young fulness of hope from the living world, thinking sometimes with bitter tears, "now they are getting used to it; now they are forgetting; now perhaps they are saying, 'She is better off, poor thing,' when all the time I am wanting help as I never did before."

"Why should they think we are dead?" she would say fretfully to Henry Dilworth, "why don't they send to look for us?"

Then, with a sudden thought, she added once, "Perhaps Kate is not dead, nor Jack. Perhaps they are waiting too."

But Henry Dilworth answered sadly, shaking his head, "It isn't possible."

What Henry Dilworth was to her in those days of wretchedness she could never adequately describe. She did not realize it at the time; it was only afterwards that she looked back and saw how he had made it possible for her to go on living, when without him she would have died. His care protected her from the extremes of physical suffering which her frail body could not have resisted; his sympathy was the moral support which prevented her mind from yielding to that hopeless depression which threatened to overcome her. It was he who built the little hut which sheltered her and the child after their first few nights on shore; it was he who relinquished his own share of the store of food in order to eke out hers and make it last longer, contenting himself altogether with the nauseous sea-birds' flesh. It was he who netted a hammock of string, and even contrived a pillow of sea-birds' feathers for her use, so that she was no longer compelled to sleep on the hard damp ground. In every way possible he

alleviated the hardships of her position, and mitigated its lonely misery.

The other men were kind but rough; they could not understand her feelings, and she had no pleasure in speaking to them. But Henry Dilworth was sympathetic as well as patient. He would listen for hours when she talked of home and described to him her happy life and the kindly people there. She asked for no information in return for all she gave to him; she showed no interest in his past career or present situation. She might have imagined that he had no personal history, that his life began with her need of his help and sympathy. For the adventures he had related on the vessel remained mere idle tales to her, having no reality, no bearing on his actual existence.

In spite of all his efforts to alleviate the hardship of her position, she suffered miserably, physically as well as mentally. Her health began to fail, her strength decreased, and her appetite lessened as the quality of the food which it was possible to offer to her deteriorated.

Then the little boy sickened and died. It was some disappointment to Henry Dilworth to find how little sympathy she, who demanded so much herself, had for the ailing child. His illness did not rouse her to helpful exertion; she shrank, on the contrary, from seeing him; and expressed more than once a dread of his dying in her presence. Henry Dilworth took him from her hut to his own, and nursed him there.

That was a miserable time for Agnes. She saw less of Henry Dilworth than usual, and even when she saw him, evidently occupied less of his thoughts than before. There was a need stronger than hers at the moment, and he did not fail to answer to it. His loving care of the child, his sympathy, his patience, won back to him the hearts of the rough but kindly sailors; and they were inclined to do what they could to help in his work of mercy. Only Agnes stood aloof, perplexed, fretful, miserable. She did not like the child, which had indeed nothing pretty or pleasing about it; she liked it still less for being ill, she felt only that its sickness added to the misery, that its death would increase the horror of the place.

But when it was all over and the little sufferer was laid in his dreary grave, to suffer no more, Henry Dilworth first forgave, and afterwards forgot, the insensibility of Agnes. She could not help it, he thought; she was too frail herself to endure the reflected sufferings of others. Her sweet appealing look had no hint of selfishness in it, her attitude of gentle demand was beautiful enough to seem right and reasonable; her timidity and meekness put a pleasing veil over anything which might have seemed ugly or obtrusive in her demands on others.

Her failing strength and increasing hopelessness gave her at last an apparent patience; she ceased to complain, ceased to ask for anything, but sat with weary looks in a silence that refused to be comforted.

It moved Henry Dilworth to unutterable pity to see the dreary melancholy in her worn face, the face which had been so soft in its outlines, so hopeful in its expression.

After the first few weeks she shrank from much talk, even with Henry Dilworth; her eyes alone perpetually demanded some help, some change,

something to be done to put an end to horrors too great to be borne, and yet it seemed, as the weeks went on to months and still no succour came, that there was nothing left for him to do for her; he could only watch her die.

It was the hardest thing he had endured in his life to pass those days on the island without the possibility of procuring a single one of all the comforts needed by the sick girl. Her pathetic eyes haunted him, even in the darkness; her faint and weary voice sounded in his ears with a perpetual reproach. It comforted him little to know that her life had been prolonged so far chiefly by his efforts on her behalf; it was little satisfaction to feel that he had already done very much, so long as that much was miserably inadequate.

A dull depression overcame at last the spirits of all on the island. They clung to life with the obstinacy of an inherited instinct, but it was a life devoid of any sort of satisfaction, and lighted only by a tiny spark of hope.

This hope was kindled to a blaze—once, twice, three times—by the appearance of a far-off ship. It was only a speck on the horizon, but it meant to them food and shelter, safety and home. They greeted the appearance of the first ship with tumultuous delight, and believed their deliverance secure. But all their efforts to attract attention proved useless; the ship passed on and made no sign of having seen them. It was the same with the second and third vessels which were sighted on the far-off horizon; and these repeated disappointments produced an impatient excitement among the men not easy to control. Henry Dilworth regarded the appearance of the ships one after another as a hopeful sign. It was evident that whaling or some other business brought vessels near the island at this season of the year, and he considered it impossible that many could pass without observing the signals of distress made from the cliffs.

But the agitation and suspense were injurious to Agnes, and threatened to extinguish the faint spark of life left in her. It flickered up brightly with the coming of hope, only to die down into a dim glimmer when the hope passed away. When a ship was announced to be in sight, the brightness came back to her eye and a flush to her hollow cheek; she found strength to clamber up the rocks, and from the highest point to watch with the rest the movements of that insignificant speck which filled them all with overpowering excitement. When the speck became fainter and smaller and finally disappeared, the deadly pallor returned to the young girl's cheek and the trembling weakness to her limbs. She needed the help of Henry Dilworth to struggle back to her hut and there lie down breathless and exhausted in the hammock he had made for her.

It grieved him at those times to let her go in alone, and to hear her sobbing afterwards in the silence and darkness of the place. Outside he paced about in a fever of rebellion, for it was dreadful to him to feel that he could not give to her the tender care which she would have had at such a moment from a mother or a sister. She was so weak now that it had become an effort for her to do anything for herself; and he would have chosen to nurse her as he had nursed the little boy, to be at her call every hour of the day and night.

She could struggle in and out of her hut in the daytime, to look at the sunshine, and to eat the miserable meals which his cooking made the most of for her sake; but he knew that her nights were wretched, that she could not sleep much, that when she did sleep she was afflicted by dreadful dreams, from which she woke shivering and terrified.

"If many more ships come—and go," she said to him, "it will kill me, I know; my heart beats so that I can hardly bear it afterwards."

When the third ship disappeared from sight she was sitting with the rest on the highest point of the island beside the bonfire which had been made. The daylight was fading; the sinking sun and all the sea were being swallowed up in a dull mist. She looked over the narrowing expanse of water with an expression of hopelessness.

"If another comes," she said to Henry Dilworth, "it will be too late now."

"Let me take you back to your cabin," was all he answered; "it is getting very cold here."

"Do you think I can get back?" she said. "I feel as if I could never walk again."

"You are tired; you want rest; give me your hand; it was too far to come."

"I thought it was for the last time," she said, "that I should *never* go back to the hut, I mean. Why should I go? I might as well die here."

"You are not dying; and if you cannot walk I will carry you."

She smiled faintly. "It isn't quite so bad as that yet, I think."

Nevertheless, when she rose to her feet she trembled very much, and seemed hardly able to stand. He put his arm round her supportingly, and she leaned against him, trembling still.

"You are sorry for me, are you not?" she asked, looking wistfully into his face.

"A great deal more than sorry."

She glanced round her drearily, taking in all the dreary features of the place.

"I think I shall never come here again," she said, "to-day was my last chance. Let us go."

With the help of his supporting arm she made her way slowly back to her hut. At the door of it she paused breathless, and leaning against Henry Dilworth looked again into his face.

"If I die, and they come in time, don't leave me here; don't bury me here; take me with you."

It was a strange request, and it moved him strangely.

"If I can't take you with me alive, it seems as if I shouldn't care to go myself!" he answered.

She looked at him with a faint surprise and pleasure.

"Do you care so much?" she said; "that is more than being kind."

She seemed reluctant to enter the solitary comfortless hut; she had glanced at it once with a shrinking movement; now she remained leaning against his arm, as if she found strength as well as rest there.

"Don't go far away," she said suddenly. "I am afraid."

"I will stay near enough to hear if you speak to me," he answered.

"And if I die, bring me out; don't leave me to die in the dark alone."

"I will come if you speak," he repeated.

The position was beyond words. He did not know how to offer all the pitying tenderness which he felt.

She turned her eyes to him earnestly as if with an unuttered question.

"And speak to me; tell me you are sorry; don't let me die, as if no one cared."

She looked away again over the sea, and then back to his face.

"They care at home; they love me. They would come if they could, to be with me and make it easier. But they are far away, and they don't know; they think I am dead already. You are here, only you. You must not let me feel alone, forgotten. You must tell me—oh! it's no use," she broke off suddenly; "what do I want?" and, raising herself from his support, she went into the hut.

Henry Dilworth made no effort to sleep that night. Through all the long hours of it he paced up and down outside her door. He could not rest, could not cease to think of her for a moment. She was in such terrible need of loving care, of the closest tenderness, that it was a dreadful thing to leave her to spend those hours of darkness alone, looking into the coming face of death. If only he could have sat beside her to chafe her cold hands and speak reassuringly, that would at least have been some comfort to her, though but a small part of all she needed. Never before had he been in a position where help was urgently required of a sort which he could not give, and it was miserable to him to feel that she missed the many personal attentions which a woman could have given in his place.

"When she is dying it will be too late," he said to himself. "I want to save her life."

As he walked up and down in the fog and darkness outside her door, a thought came to him which flushed his face and quickened his steps.

"If it were possible it might be worth while, even for her sake. There is no other way in which I could have the chance of doing the best for her and keeping her alive. But it isn't possible here, even if she would consent."

She was so young, he thought, to die for the want of that care and tenderness which it would have been his delight to lavish upon her; so young; and she might be saved for a life of happiness and love!

With the sinking of the sun the wind had fallen to a dead calm, and with its falling the hopes of Henry Dilworth sank lower. It was the wind, probably, which had driven the ships so near the island; if it passed away, the chance of more vessels following the same course would be lessened. A thick mist crept over the sea stealthily and steadily as the hours darkened to midnight. It hushed the heaving waters; it swallowed up the outlying rocks and the white foam on the shore; it covered the island and clung about it.

When morning broke, the air was very still. A deep calm reigned over the invisible sea; hardly was the dull thunder of the breakers heard on the rocks below. The daylight struggled feebly through the mist; no sun was at first to be seen; but towards noon the light grew stronger, the fog lifted, and suddenly the sea was visible. A great shout went up from the sailors who were standing near the shore, and the shout awakened Agnes from a late uneasy slumber.

She rose on her elbow and listened, her heart beating painfully. There was something strange, wild, jubilant, in the shout, and she could not tell what it might portend.

Then she heard the voice of Henry Dilworth at her door—that voice which had been so often to her the assurance of help—

“Are you awake, Miss Leake?”

She could not speak to answer him, but she sat up in her hammock, and drew her rain-cloak more tightly about her, looking expectantly at the door.

Henry Dilworth was alarmed by the silence. For a moment he thought that his worst fears were realized. He pushed open the rickety door, and went straight in.

When he saw her leaning forward in her hammock, gazing at him, fearfully, entreatingly, as if she dreaded his errand, and begged him to spare her more shocks of disappointment, he could find no words to tell her his news without startling her. He lifted her in his arms and carried her out to look at the sea.

There was no need of any explanation.

The pale sun shone through the mist still hanging above the sea, and shed a chilly gleam on the grey water, where, with her image reflected on the shining surface, lay a ship at anchor; and a little boat was already making for the land.

(To be continued.)

SISTER VERITY'S VENGEANCE.

BY JOHN SUTHERLAND.

AGNES ANDERSON thought herself an extremely fortunate girl when she became Mrs. Sanday. Her husband broke his engagement with a lady of position in order to marry her, a poor friendless governess. She was always inclined to be a little vain, and what could be more flattering to her vanity? Besides, her husband, Fred Sanday, was a remarkably handsome young fellow, a favourite everywhere, who came of one of the best families in the country. Although his father allowed him a plentiful supply of money, he had none of his own, which showed the sacrifice he made in rejecting an heiress to marry her. She sometimes wondered at his choice, for the heiress was said to be rather good-looking and exceedingly amiable, while she had nothing except her personal appearance to recommend her. But she had in some way fascinated Fred, so that he could not help himself. Her mastery over him was complete. He was desirous that their marriage should be a private one, lest his father stopped his allowance; but to please her, the ceremony was conducted openly, with the result he anticipated—he was thrown upon his own resources; in future he must work for his wife and himself, or else they would starve. Then the question arose, What could he do? Nothing, in this country, he told himself; so giving his wife all the money he could spare, he left her to seek his fortune in New Zealand.

After he left, Agnes found married life in lodgings a cheerless, prosaic existence. The little money she had soon ran down, and she was not in

a condition to look for employment. Worse than all, Fred only sent one or two letters until he ceased to write altogether. He might be dead for anything she knew.

Her rent was so long due that her landlord threatened to turn her into the street. When she spoke of mercy he said there was the parish for such as she; he must have his rent. At the same time he made his wife to keep her regularly supplied with food, for she had not even the necessities of life.

One day, as she felt more worried and ill than usual, there was a knock at the door, and before she could rise to answer it, a pale, interesting face, under a hood, was thrust in.

“If ever there was a good woman, this is one,” she said to herself, rising to welcome the stranger.

“Don’t rise, Mrs. Sanday,” said the other familiarly as she went forward. “I have been told of you, and have come to see you. We Sisters, you know, are the friends of the friendless; so you are not to put yourself the least about on account of this visit. Sit down, please, and give me your news.”

“I have no news but what is bad.”

“I am sorry for that.”

“It’s terrible to be forsaken—desolate.”

“I know how terrible it is when a person is actually forsaken.”

“And am not I? Not a friend have I in the world. My husband must be dead, or I would have had letters.”

“May he not have grown careless?” said the Sister, a suggestion evidently so repugnant to the young wife that she hastily added—“His business engagements may be the true cause, or perhaps he intends giving you a surprise one of these days by coming himself.”

“I wish he would—I do wish he would. Fred must have me often in his thoughts if he is still alive.”

There was a large framed photograph of the husband above the fireplace, which the Sister observing, rose to look at.

“This is Mr. Sanday, I suppose?” she said, with a strange, sad smile.

Agnes nodded; and then came the curious question of—

“Now, do you love him very much?”

“Of course I do; is he not my husband?”

“Quite right,” said the other, staring at the photograph, which seemed to interest her a good deal. “I can understand you loving him,” she said at last. “Indeed, I was once foolish enough to be in love with such a person myself,—before I joined the Order to which I now belong. For Sister Verity there is no more selfish dreaming; her love has been transformed into a love that burns strongest for the poor and despised among God’s creatures.”

Her voice, so sad, was full of sympathy. Agnes, who had few thoughts above or beyond her own wants, congratulated herself on having found some one to befriend her. She liked the stranger instinctively. Her manner and appearance suggested something superior to ordinary humanity. But Agnes, who had a weakness for style, thought her doleful dress just a little unbecoming.

“You must think of me as your sister,” said the stranger, awaking from a reverie. “I am Sister Verity, remember.”

"Very well, Sister Verity."

"When you want money or are in trouble, you must come to me—that is, if I don't call. But I don't mean to let you feel forsaken; I shall come and see you often."

"You are very kind."

"The object of my present life, you should understand, is to be kind to those who are most in need of kindness. I don't want you to feel indebted for anything I do. If you wish to show your gratitude in any way, let it be by sharing your troubles with me."

"They are so many at present!" said the young wife with a sigh.

"They are only many in appearance; one in reality. Suppose your husband was to walk in just now?"

"Oh, I should have no troubles—not one!"

Sister Verity smiled at the delusive exemption from trouble which to the fond wife seemed possible.

"Allowing he did walk in, I fear there would be something or other else at fault," she said. "Still, it is best to look at the favourable side of things. In this world of sin, complete happiness is unattainable."

A cloud settled on Agnes's face, which showed that she too had her doubts regarding a state of perfect bliss. Only that morning she had broken open her husband's private drawer, because the article of furniture of which it formed part was about to be converted into money; and in her search she lighted upon certain letters, the perusal of which had disturbed her peace of mind more than she cared to reveal. Having tied them up carefully as she had found them, they were reserved as a bone of contention against her husband's return. Though ignorant of the cause of her distressed looks, Sister Verity saw that all was not well.

"What is it, dear?" she said, laying her hand affectionately on the young wife's shoulder. "Tell me; give me your confidence."

"Oh, I cannot."

"Just try. There can be no harm in my knowing."

"It's some letters," sobbed Agnes; "some undated letters. They may or may not have been written before I became acquainted with Fred."

"Who wrote them?"

"Some infatuated woman evidently. As I say, they have no date, and the signature is a pet name, which makes the matter look terribly suspicious. It's dreadful to think of him keeping up a correspondence with another. He was engaged to a lady before he married me, but I should have thought he would return her letters."

"Perhaps not the whole of them. You might let me see these letters."

Agnes hesitated for a moment, and then, going to a press, brought the disturbing packet out.

Sister Verity took it, and, with trembling fingers and bloodless cheeks, undid the string. A glance at the handwriting appeared to satisfy her.

"You have suffered no injury through these letters," she said. "At the same time, they should have been burnt. May I cast them into the fire?" and without waiting for permission, she did so. She watched them as they burnt

away, taking care that every shred of writing was consumed.

Agnes looked on silently, glad to get rid of the letters, but not at all convinced that the Sister's assurance that she had received no injury through them was more than a word of comfort.

"I should have done that myself when I found them," she said.

"Of course you should. However, it is done now. Why were you so weak as to nurse imaginary grievances when you had so many real troubles?"

"Ah, Sister, I am afraid you don't know what it is to love, or you would regard my weakness differently;" and delivering herself of this, she began to cry.

"Don't—please don't," pleaded the other, which might mean either that Agnes was to cease crying, or to refrain from throwing out taunts about love.

Agnes dried her tears, as being in all probability the correct solution of the enigma. Moreover, being informed by Sister Verity that her time was limited, she wished her to understand before leaving how ill Fred had been treated by his friends for no greater fault than that he had married her instead of an heiress.

Sister Verity listened to her story patiently, saying at the end—

"It was very wrong of them—very wrong indeed."

"Yes; but I blame his mother most. She is a proud, vain woman. Fred says so himself. For me, I have never seen her—have never seen any of them. I wrote to Mrs. Sanday once or twice, acquainting her with my circumstances. Think of her cruelty, to return my letters with the postage unpaid!"

"That was not a motherly action on her part certainly. But you should have appealed to the old gentleman as well. You might do so still."

"If I thought there was any use. I might try," she added, hopefully.

"Yes, do. Gentlemen are much more ready to relent than we women. There can be no harm in writing, and it may lead him to acknowledge you. In the meantime you are not to concern yourself about the future. I will undertake that you shall be provided for."

Agnes thanked her, and when she was gone sat down and wrote a letter to her father-in-law, setting forth her difficulties, more, however, as they existed in the past than in the present. Sister Verity's liberality, she persuaded herself, was not a matter of which she was necessarily bound to give an account. Therefore she said nothing regarding her visit, or the deliverance that accrued therefrom.

Great was her surprise to receive a letter by the next post, containing a five-pound note. There was no writing or anything to show where the money had come from, but Agnes knew that Mr. Sanday was the sender.

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, yes; I don't mind if I do accompany you to one or two of your most interesting cases. You are aware I take a great pleasure in charitable work, it has grown so very respectable of late.

But you will be good enough not to take me to a very low locality; I can't bear low people."

The speaker was a middle-aged lady, of a rather aristocratic, proud appearance; still, her face had an amiable, pleasant look. Sister Verity, to whom she spoke, knew her to be a much better woman than anybody would fancy, judging from her artificial manner. She was all airs outside, but had a real backing of solid kindness.

"I am going to take you to a very respectable neighbourhood," said the sister, "to see a woman for whom your money has done a great deal."

"Don't mention money, Verity. Am I not childless? To what better use could it go? Whenever you want money come to me."

"I think I have been troubling you a great deal of late for money; but I am putting it to a good use. You have no idea how much you have done for the poor woman we are going to see. She was quite destitute when I found her, and was threatened to be turned into the street because she could not pay her rent. Now she is a mother—has got such a fine baby, such a beauty——"

Sister Verity's enthusiasm as she described the baby reminding the lady of something that might have been, she clasped her arm warmly, and with affectionate tenderness muttered, "Poor child," a piece of commiseration which embarrassed the younger woman so that she cut her glowing description short. They walked on in silence for some distance afterwards, the Sister conscious that the gentle pressure on her arm was a mark of sympathy, and as such was anything but agreeable. Satisfied with the life she had chosen, she felt none of that regret in the existence of which her companion evidently believed. Her affection was neither centred in the world nor its joys, babies included. Having renounced them all, she looked forward with a peace of mind whose blessedness it would be folly to try and make a woman of the world understand.

"I think I have suffered more than you on account of Fred's folly," said Sister Verity's companion at last, disappointed with the calmness of her conduct. "A mother's love, I am now persuaded is the deepest of all."

"Possibly," replied the other with a grim smile, as she reflected how this loving mother had disowned her son for marrying beneath him. Sister Verity was shrewd enough to understand it was the loss of the heiress, and not the dishonourable way in which she had been treated, that was the actual fault for which his mother refused to forgive him.

"I often think of my son, in spite of how he has disgraced me and himself."

"That is very natural," said Sister Verity calmly.

"I don't know that it's a bit natural; it only shows my excessively affectionate nature to give him a stray thought," said the mother warmly. "He should have been my happiness, instead of being my sorrow. He has turned my hair grey, dwelling on the disgrace he has brought on us."

"I daresay he has suffered for it all, poor fellow!"

"And he will suffer more yet. He shall live in poverty all his life. What can he do in New Zealand, or anywhere else, to make an income? I'll warrant his wife fancied she was making a grand match, the poor mistaken goose!"

"Are you not too hard on her?"

"Hard? No! I should like to see her begging in the streets. You, very likely, would be soft enough to take pity on her, and do what you could in her behalf; but I would get a policeman to hunt her about from place to place. And that would only be serving her right."

"Mrs. Sanday, how can you talk so cruelly?"

"Forgive me," she said, realizing that such hatred must be highly objectionable to her hearer. But she experienced no regret; her sentiments towards her daughter-in-law were still the same. "It is very improbable," she said laughing, "that Mrs. Fred, like you, will ever fall under the necessity of taking a vow to live a life of poverty. She has commenced a begging correspondence already. Fred's father, unknown to me, sent her five pounds. I was very much displeased when I heard of it. Why should she expect anything from us? I told Mr. Sanday that he had no right to send money to a person of whom he knew absolutely nothing. I got him to promise faithfully not to send more. I want him to do all his charity through you, as I do. Are you not obliged to me?"

"Oh yes. Your money has helped my schemes exceedingly."

"I like that. I like praise when I deserve it."

With a self-satisfied smile on her face, her steps seemed to become vigorous, and, to her, a charitable visit for the first time assumed a somewhat rosy aspect.

"Well, about this woman that has such a charming baby—has she lost her husband?"

"She has lost sight of him, if she has not lost him entirely. He went abroad some time ago, and she has not heard from him lately. I have taken a great fancy to the girl—she is quite young—and I think you will like her too. She is quite an attractive person, though in reduced circumstances at present."

"Indeed! It's the sort of case then to interest one. If she belongs to the better end of society, I hope you deal liberally with her. I shall find fault if she has been pinched in any way, remember. You know where to come for money."

"She is as comfortable as it is advisable a person should be who is supported by any charitable endeavours; perhaps more so. She lives in this street."

"It looks a quiet, respectable place," said Mrs. Sanday, glancing all round.

The street, though far from being a fashionable one, had a very fair appearance, because each house had a small plot of ground in front, and most of these were tastefully laid out with shrubs and flowers. Sister Verity, on coming to a certain number, rang the bell at the gate. They were admitted by a young, rather untidy girl, who gave the Sister a smile of recognition. In answer to an inquiry as to how the woman upstairs was to-day she simply replied, "Oh, fine!" and allowed them to pass on. Sister Verity led the way. They found the object of their visit sitting in a plainly furnished room nursing her baby.

"This lady has come to see you," said Sister Verity by way of introduction. "I have been telling her what a fine baby you have got, and now she can see for herself. Is it not a beauty?" she said, taking the baby and holding it up for inspection.

"A lovely child indeed!"

"A boy," said Sister Verity.

"A boy! What age?" she asked the mother.

"Three months."

"What a fine fellow for his age! I wonder if I still remember how to nurse. Let me try, Sister Verity."

The child was given to her, and she bestowed the greatest attention on it, with the desire of flattering the mother. She thought her charity had been well administered when she saw the handsome young wife and her healthy, promising son; and she was now eager to earn a name for pleasing manners as well as for liberal giving.

"I sometimes do a little cooking when I call here," said Sister Verity to the new nurse. "I should like to do so now if you could wait for me. You see our friend has no helper."

"Certainly I can wait. I am so charmed with the baby and proud of my nursing that you may cook all day for my part."

The mother smiled her grateful acknowledgements, and then went with Sister Verity into an adjoining apartment. She had been receiving lessons in household management and cooking; the Sister having been good enough, when she came daily, to prepare her principal meal, with the object of imparting some knowledge of an art of which she was profoundly ignorant.

"The cookery lesson must be dispensed with to-day," said Sister Verity, who knew the resources of the kitchen as well as the person to whom she spoke. "I want you to make yourself as agreeable to that lady as you possibly can. You understand? Exert yourself to the utmost to please her; but remember one thing—don't let her know that your name is Sanday. If you do, she will never come back. That's all I have to say. Go now."

Agnes was a good deal mystified by this peculiar speech. The Sister's earnestness in its delivery convinced her that it was important to obey, and although she would like to learn more, she rejoined the lady without asking any explanation.

"I feel quite a liking for your son, he is such a fine healthy fellow. He reminds me of a baby—now a man—that was very dear to me. It is rather early to say who he is to resemble; but I scarcely think it will be you."

"He is to be more like his father, Sister Verity thinks."

"Then she has seen your husband? She tells me he is abroad at present. I am sure he would be very proud if he knew that he has got such a fine son."

"I hope he does know; I wrote to him. But a reply takes a long time to come from New Zealand."

"New Zealand! How strange! I have a son there. It's a long way, a terrible long way off. Such a distance between husband and wife, you will agree with me, is far too far."

"We can only be of one mind on that point," replied Agnes sadly. "It's far too far for mother and son even to be separated."

"Well, it is," said the other, not wishing to convey the impression that in her own case geographical distance mattered very little.

"I wonder if your son has come across my husband? I suppose he writes regularly?"

"Not so often as he might," said the elder woman, growing uneasy. She was not there to

be questioned in such a manner; she was almost about to protest, but as that would reveal a sore point, she contented herself by saying, "The general experience seems to be that persons in that part of the world soon grow very careless about corresponding with their friends at home."

"My own experience unfortunately bears out the popular view. At the same time, to give my husband justice, I believe he is ill. Sometimes I even think he is dead, or I would hear from him."

Before she had ceased to speak, unperceived by her, Fred came quietly slipping into the room. He was very thin, and looked as if he was recovering from a severe illness. What added considerably to his forlorn appearance, he had his left arm tied in a sling. His first impulse was to bound forward and throw his disengaged arm around his wife's neck; but seeing his mother, policy restrained him. He remembered how he used to wheedle her out of large sums of money by demonstrations of affection; and instead of showing the love he actually felt for his wife, he determined to flatter her by simulating a part which, to say the truth, had very little reality. Throwing his whole arm around her neck, he kissed her with ardour repeatedly.

The good woman was so much horrified that she almost threw the baby on the floor, for, as he had approached from behind, she had not seen him, and his kisses blinded her for the time being.

"Whose baby are you nursing?" he asked eagerly on observing the child, who had hitherto escaped his notice. As soon as he spoke the old lady knew her son's voice.

"Fred!" she said in surprise. "It's you, Fred! I am glad to see you; that is—I am glad on the whole. Yes, I am glad. Now, tell me how you happened to come here?"

"Where was I more likely to land at last than in my own home?"

"Your own home!" she repeated; but an explanation was unnecessary, for Agnes, in tears, was now hugging him.

"Ha! ha! This is a conspiracy," said the old lady indignantly, as she rose and held the child out to its mother. "Take your baby, you treacherous gipsy! You knew who I was all along; don't say you didn't. I see through the plot."

"If there is any plot, madam, I am sorry," said the young wife, with a straightforwardness that was convincing. "I at least was not a party to it. Until this moment I was not aware that you are the lady I now understand you to be."

"She did not tell you—the Sister?"

"No: you may ask her."

This information had a consoling effect. She took her seat again, held out her arms for the baby, who by Fred had been fondled and kissed in the meantime, and having got him once more, motioned her bewildered son to a chair by her side.

"You would be astonished to see me here nursing your child," she said, feeling more glad at heart than she was willing to admit. "I don't believe I should have come if I had known all. You have a friend to thank for what I suppose must be a reconciliation. She is in the kitchen; perhaps you had better go and ask her pardon at once."

"Yes, do thank her, Fred," said Agnes; "she

has been kind to me! oh, so very kind—I don't know what I should have done but for her."

Fred rose and went to the kitchen, with a dim understanding that he was to thank somebody unknown for kindness of some kind. He soon returned with a perturbed face.

"Heavens! what do you mean by having a nun in this house, Agnes? You are not a Roman Catholic. If you are, you never told me so."

Mother and wife laughed, and even the baby had a playful smile on his face.

"Go and speak to her," said his mother. "She is no Roman Catholic, but a Sister of your own church."

As he was about to return to the kitchen, Sister Verity, having finished her cooking, came into the room. She drew back with a slight start on seeing her faithless lover, and then advanced with a very pale face and shook his hand warmly.

"Your arm?" she said inquiringly, in a voice that faltered in spite of her.

"It's nothing; I am all right now. My arm, or any of the hardships through which I passed, are as nothing compared with—"

The appearance of his eyes told Sister Verity what was coming. She might be able to listen to an apology at some future time, but she could not and dared not, trust herself to hear him then.

"Come, let us be off," she said to his mother; "we are not wanted at present."

"Certainly, dear," said the other, perceiving her embarrassment; and handing the baby to Fred, she followed her out of the room.

"You will both come and see us often," he cried after them.

"I will," said Sister Verity; "of course."

"And you, mother?"

"Yes, my son."

Both women descended the stair in silence. On getting into the street Mrs. Sanday grew eloquent on how Fred, to the neglect of his wife, had given his first and greatest attention to her. Sister Verity scarcely spoke at all.

According to her promise, she went often afterwards to see the young couple, and the only allusion which Fred ever made to the past was, "You may not know it, but your kindness has been a terrible vengeance!"

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS OF HARTLE.

BY CHARLES KRUEGER.

PART III.

BETWEEN the husband and wife a great deal of the restraint gradually passed away during that night. But this evaporation had a limit. She had no intention of ever again extending to him an obedience, nor did he dare to expect it. He might share her home, but not her affections.

On this same evening John Drake was sorely puzzled. He sat at his farm, wearing hat and leggings, just as he had come in from driving. His hand held a letter which had been awaiting him, having been sent by messenger, and the contents bewildered him. It ran thus:

"Dear Mr. Drake,—

"A circumstance has unexpectedly happened which renders it imperative that our en-

gagement should be at once annulled—in other words, our marriage is impossible. At this moment I feel unequal to the task of explaining all, and must leave that until a better opportunity. When you have learnt all you will know how much I am to be pitied. Let me beg that you will at once discontinue your visits here; and with my regrets for our mutual disappointment, and hopes for your future happiness and prosperity, I am, my dear Mr. Drake,

"Very sincerely yours,

"JANE CREWE."

"What is she driving at?" said the farmer to himself, after a fourth reading. "She doesn't upbraid me about anything; it isn't a quarrelsome letter. I'll go and see her, and have some understanding." Quite forgetting the injunction the note contained respecting visits. But some friends arrived at the farm and they must needs be entertained, so the visit could not be made that night. Still John Drake was very uneasy; he considered that his happiness was in jeopardy, and, what was of at least equal importance, the happiness of his bride-elect—Jane Crewe.

It was unusually late when Ellen returned home that night, and then she kept away from the presence of her father. Next day was passed in the cottage with customary quiet, only that Ellen carefully avoided paying even a scant attention to the new inmate. But it was when she was alone that she allowed expression to her feelings, then she would give manifestations of rage and hatred which were extraordinary in a young lady. "It was an evil day for him when he came near me," she said, more than once.

And whatever may have been the attractions of John Crewe in the years that were gone, their lustre was certainly dimmed now. That he *had been* a handsome man one could readily believe, from the outlines of the face and the dark blue of the eyes, but now the countenance was blotchy and red, there was an ugly scar on the cheek, and the eyes were slightly bloodshot. His voice, once melodious, had now a hard and forced sound; his hair was of uneven lengths; his garments were old-fashioned, odd, old, and worn; he was the wreck of the man Jane had married; unfortunately the wreck was not alone of physique and finance, but of morality too.

On the evening after his arrival he suddenly became communicative and begun to speak of his career. His wife and daughter were both in the room, and the subject was not tasteful to them; but John Crewe was enjoying himself, so he talked away.

"You will be wondering about that Californian newspaper," said he, turning to his wife, "that was one of my wild freaks. I wrote the paragraph in a half drunken fit; and when the paper was printed with it in I half repented using it for the purpose. Then, after more liquor, I got a friend to address a label and I sent you a copy. I was sorry after. But it's all over now. I've reformed."

This fellow seemed to think that reformation and regret should take the sting out of all his villany.

Ellen's first impulse had been to quit the room; but then a sudden desire prompted her to stay, and, while pretending to be occupied by other things, she listened attentively.

"I expected to do well in America, and when I'd sobered down I didn't do badly," Crewe continued, as he toyed with his thin grey-brown beard. "Of course, like many more people who go out there, I was a lot of things by turns. I got into a new settlement. There the more use a man was the better for his pocket. When a school was set up they wanted a teacher, naturally. Instead of importing one they gave me the job, and I kept school and a store shop too. Of course"—here the man half stammered—"I had a partner who looked after the store whilst I was teaching. And for a long time all went swimmingly, and I got a little pile hid away; safe from everybody's eyes, I thought. But it wasn't. No. One afternoon, when I come home from teaching, I found a little girl left in care of the shop. My partner had gone, and she had taken all my savings along with her. It was a man, that I thought was my friend, that had taken her away. And now I know he was my friend,"—this seemed a new idea just suggested to him. "Yes, it turned out to be a very friendly trick, and I thanked him for it. She was a bad woman," he said thoughtfully, "or she wouldn't have enticed me from my home in this country."

Ellen Crewe had heard enough and she rose impatiently and went out of the room. Mrs. Crewe looked at her debased husband with a glance of reproach. He read it and said no more. The mother soon followed her daughter, and the returned wanderer was left alone. Then he rose and yawned discontently.

"I try to thaw 'em a bit," he grumbled, "and I put my foot in it. Jane's all right. It's the girl; she's stuck up."

Meanwhile Ellen spoke rather hotly to her mother. "I know now," she said, "the matter concerning this man that you would not speak of. He deserted you. And then, after staying as long as he pleased, you receive him into *your* house."

The reply was quiet. "Ellen, guard against that temper of yours and don't speak so hasty."

"Mother, I would have had more spirit."

"You needn't fret, girl, he may choose to go soon."

"Where I wish him to go is—to his grave."

Mrs. Crewe started, terrified. "Ellen, how can you say—Oh, how can you be so wicked!"

The girl had said nothing more than she meant. But she was sorry and ashamed directly the words were spoken. She hated the man, and thought him a low-lived good-for-nothing, and she would never speak of him as her father, but always the contemptuous—"that man."

John Crewe had scarcely come back from the village when the clocks struck ten, and almost on the hour minute Farmer Drake walked down the cottage path and, after a preparatory knock at the door, made his way into the parlour at the back, where he had usually been received. He appeared to scarcely expect seeing such an occupant as John Crewe. Naturally and hastily he thought "Has this man anything to do with Jane's change?" It has been mentioned how little nervousness troubled Mr. Drake. So instead of retreating at sight of the stranger, he sat down and gave him a good evening. Jane Crewe was quickly in the room; the knock, followed by the sound of the firm step, had hurried her, and she came with a flushed

face, for she guessed at the visitor. Drake could not very well open the important subject in the presence of a third party; so they must needs talk upon whatever commonplace matter they could find suitable. But all three were uncomfortable. Jane thinking of the relationship of the men to her, and of the necessity for explanation to the farmer, an unpleasant task which cried for fulfilment. Crewe wondering *who* was the free-and-easy walk-in farmer chap; John Drake taking mental measurement of the man who sat by the fire with every appearance of being at home.

Drake sat a long time, much to the discomfort of Jane. Then finding he was making no headway to an explanation, he reluctantly made a movement of departure; and walked out very slowly, hoping Mrs. Crewe would go with him as far as the door, and there give him a word of explanation, or let him have an opportunity of speaking. But no; Jane shook hands and bid her adieu in the room, thus guarding against any chance being given.

If the farmer could but have seen what a struggle Mrs. Crewe had undergone he would truly have had great pity for her. She had been striving hard for the strength to say, "Mr. Drake, this is my husband, whom I thought dead." But she was ashamed to own the blotched wreck. And no introduction had been made.

The farmer hesitated, hoping, at the door of the cottage, and then, not venturing to loiter longer, he turned down the path and back to the road. The weather was inclined to wildness; noisy winds whistled through the trees, and lifted and whirled the dead leaves, and swung the branches and their burdens. It was rather dark, too; the stars the only light.

As John Drake reached the little wicket-gate he was in deep thought, and suddenly found himself by the side of some one who had been standing at the gate. It was a female, he could see. But who? Then she spoke and he recognized Ellen's voice.

"Good night, Mr. Drake."

"Good night, Ellen. Why, what are you doing out in this wild night, and without a hat too?"

"It's too warm in the house."

"The farmer was standing, undecided; questioning whether he should try and sound the girl respecting the man inside."

"I called to speak to your mother," he began, "but she was busy." Ellen gave sound to what appeared to be a grunt of dissatisfaction.

"You have a visitor, I see," Drake added.

"Yes; a pretty visitor, truly," was the bitter reply. "I wish you would shoot him, as you do the vermin that invest your ground." And with this flaring speech the young lady walked away from the gate, leaving Drake more bewildered and astonished than ever. He thought of following her, or returning to the house and asking an explanation from Mrs. Crewe, but was deterred by the fear of offending. So, after more indecision than had ever troubled him in his life before, Mr. Drake reluctantly went home; and had scarcely reached there before he repented not showing a firmer front and making a strict inquiry into the mystery that was surrounding the woman he loved.

Even after he had sat for some time at the farm, he was greatly tempted to return and see Jane if

possible. But a cooler reasoning prevailed; besides the hour was late, and the inmates of the cottage would have probably retired ere he reached there.

However, Mr. Drake had no cause to seek again at Mrs. Crewe's for an explanation. He heard what was sufficient elsewhere. Hartle had much spare time, which it sought to fill by the discussion of private matters concerning any of the population—Hartle was fairly impartial in this respect; it was not a very cliquish community. And by some means—nobody confessed to knowing *how*—it had eked out that there was a new resident in the "schoolmistress's" cottage, and that it was nobody less than the husband of Mrs. Crewe, who, according to her previous giving out, had been dead some ten years. But really he had been in America, and Australia, and Germany, and Russia, and had now—said gossip—returned to England and had been tramping the country gathering pennies by conjuring to school-children, and coming to Hartle, he had unexpectedly found his wife just as she was about to marry again. This is the story as told in its mildest form, but it thickened vastly by repetition.

The usual kind friend (maliciously kind!) met the farmer on the morning after the visit to the cottage, and remembering the projected relationship between Drake and Mrs. Crewe, did not miss the chance of being news-bearer, but blurted all out with an apologetic, "I suppose you've heard."

Mr. Drake had not heard, and he hated his informant ever after. Strong man as he was it was a blow to him, and he staggered under it. This marriage had been the hope of his life lately, and suddenly all this joy was destroyed. And he, too, was quickly filled with a hatred for this man who had unexpectedly come. "Why hadn't he died in reality?"

John hated everybody whom he thought was speaking of the "romance"—as some one had entitled it; he hated those that he thought would feel a sympathy for him. In fact, the farmer just then went in for universal hate and felt spiteful all round. To all, except Jane Crewe; and for her he had great pity and a strengthened affection. Though now he dared not to approach her, lest scandal should make busy, yet he worshipped her from afar.

He even ventured to hope still, and after meeting John Crewe one morning, and getting a good square look at the man, he had serious thoughts of anonymously sending him a fat purse for his own use, in the hope that by that means the obstacle would drink himself to death speedily. This method, however, was only temporarily entertained; it gave place to a purer reasoning.

The "romance" was the greatest treat in the remembrance of Hartle. The district newspapers made the most of it. One reporter called to interview Mrs. Crewe, and was politely told that she had nothing to say. But he was a smart young man, and slipped into the school-room where the daughter taught, thinking that her youth would not be so cautious. He stated his business and why he had come. The reply was wordless; merely a flashing of Miss Ellen's dark bright eyes and then a steady look of contempt and indignation. And the young man was smarter than ever—with his feet.

Ellen was by nature not only passionate, but

firm; and it was only at the tearful entreaty of her mother that she had consented to remain under the same roof as her father. But her behaviour mended slightly; now she was at least distantly polite to him.

And as the weeks went on, Mrs. Crewe never once relaxed from the attitude she had taken towards her husband on the night of his arrival. The man was certainly humble enough at first, and was rather grateful than otherwise. But as familiarity with his new surroundings and comforts grew, his gratitude and contentment diminished. He made little attempt to procure employment, but talked largely of his intentions and had many gigantic schemes. His chief delight was to pose as the entertainer or orator of a bar-parlour company; and he often returned home smelling strongly of beer or rum. At times his potations made him pot-valiant, and by that means he one day brought down a storm upon his head.

It was thus. When John Crewe had drunk he must needs talk, and one evening having spent what cash he had, and having also out-stayed his welcome, he was obliged to reluctantly leave the Grey Horse Inn, and return home earlier than he had intended or desired. Mrs. Crewe was out. Ellen sat in the usual parlour. For some time the man had been nursing complaints against his wife and daughter; he had begun to think himself very hardly treated; his memory was singularly short; the ills upon which he brooded were imaginary.

So he came in shivering, and pulled a chair towards the fire. He looked at Ellen, who as usual took little notice of him, and he felt snarly.

"Is your mother out?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Um!"

This was a note of disagreement and complaint. A few seconds later he asked, rather harshly—

"Is there anything in the house to drink?"

"You had best ask the servant."

"I ask whom I please, Miss Impudence," he said with a drunken stare.

Ellen quietly laid down her sewing.

"Now," she said, "one of us must go—soon."

"Let it be you—you're my enemy—no daughter of mine."

The girl stood up proudly; her eyes flashing as they had often flashed before on account of this man.

"It may not be me. It will be the weakest who goes. I *am* your enemy. I hate you"—she almost hissed.

"I knew it."

"You drunken sot!" She was speaking in a whisper, but strong with passion. "I would like to take your worthless life. *And I will do it, if you don't get away from us.*"

Then she immediately left the room, and did not go near him again during that night.

This was a fearful threat for a girl of twenty to make, and she made no mention of the scene to her mother, nor did John Crewe. And no other outburst occurred between them.

Since the "romance" had first been talked of, Mr. Frederick Marly had never once passed the threshold of the cottage, but when he met either of the Crewe ladies he merely raised his hat and walked on. Then Miss Ellen bethought her that young Marly was not good-looking nor clever, and he was certainly "a muf of a fellow." But

this did not make her disappointment less bitter, nor did it lessen the hatred she bore her father for the share with which she credited him.

"Would any high-born family receive the daughter of such a man as that? No!" This was the question and reply she had asked and given; and in that she was near the truth.

John Crewe had lived in Hartle many weeks; December was in and with it had come frost, but little snow. Some time past eleven o'clock on Christmas Eve, Jane Crewe stood at the wicket-gate which belonged her cottage, and by the light of the moon which shone brightly through the crisp and cool air, she looked up the road in the direction of the village. She had just thrown a woollen wrapper over her head and ran out, and after one good look she returned to the room where Ellen was sitting.

"What took you out, mother?"

"Nothing, girl."

"And do you really think the man worth a thought?"

"Ellen, we must have no more of this. You frighten me with your inveterate hatred of your father—whom it is your duty to respect."

"Respect!" repeated Ellen, with a sneer.

"He is your father, and it is not for you to judge him, whatever his failings may be." Ellen smiled as she heard this doctrine. "He is past his usual time," continued Jane Crewe, "and I was merely wondering what had become of him."

And here the matter was allowed to drop. They happily got to talk of other things, and as they chatted the time slipped away until the clock proclaimed *one* of the morning.

"It is Christmas Day," said Ellen; and she kissed her mother with all the old affection. Then they went to rest.

The house door was left unlocked and unbolted that John Crewe might find an entrance when he returned.

It was very late to stay out, thought the schoolmistress as she looked through her bedroom window and up at the moon sailing through the clear blue sky. When she had put out the light and the moonbeams poured through the white blind and brightened the room, and she lay thinking, a sudden thought came to her—a horrible appalling thought, that made her faint with dread!

Why was Ellen so changed that night?

The mother now very plainly remembered that Ellen had been cheerful and depressed by turns, and both in unusual degree. That she had seemed feverishly glad because so much of the time had gone, and as they went to rest Ellen had said, "A merry Christmas, mother;" but with the cruel look in her eyes that the mother had learnt to fear.

Could it be that the girl was concerned in the absence of John Crewe! The mother sickened at the thought, she had lately seen much of her daughter's dreadful temper, and—had not the girl often and openly declared the ill-will she bore to the unlucky intruder.

"She can't have killed him!" And with this low aspirated cry the schoolmistress jumped from her bed. She speedily rekindled the light, and went direct and without noise to her daughter's room. She opened the door and entered without knock or word.

Then the mother stood astonished and horrified at what she saw. For Ellen had been sitting at

the window, her light not burning, but herself still dressed. As the door was opened she had started up with a cry and a look of fear.

Mrs. Crewe thought this was guilt.

"Ellen," she said, "where is your father?"

But the girl's face changed to a look of gladness, and a malicious laugh spoke with her words: "I don't know, and I don't care."

"Oh, Ellen, what have you done?"

The girl was silent.

"Tell me," cried the mother, "where is that man?"

"Mother, go to your bed."

"I will not. Tell me what you have done. Oh, my girl, don't bring more trouble upon us."

"I will not. I will bring joy to you, if I can; or others will bring it to you. But we should both be at rest. And I shall not speak another word now."

"My poor girl, you must."

"But I *will not*," replied Ellen, very decisively—too decisive for a daughter.

Then Mrs. Crewe returned to her room, sobbing and shedding many bitter tears. But she thought the worst was to come.

John Crewe was never again seen in Hartle, nor by his wife and daughter. There was nobody found and no inquest nor trial. And the Christmas was a fairly merry one. At the breakfast Ellen had vouchsafed this explanation.

"Mother, dear, you *did* frighten me last night. You were hysterical, I'm sure. I was in hopes that man had gone, for during the last few days I have noticed some suspicious little matters; last night I saw a lot. Come here."

She led her mother a tour of several rooms, and as she went pointed out what articles were missing.

"You see, a clearance has been made," she explained, "the man has turned thief and run away. I suspected it last night, but wouldn't tell you for fear you would send after him; though I don't think you'd have done that. It appears even our own rooms were not considered sacred, for whilst we were at school during the day he had ransacked them. When you came to me last night I had just discovered that even my little trinkets were all gone. I believe I looked wild; I know I felt it."

And this explained all the mystery of John Crewe's disappearance.

Ellen soon regained her good-humour, and ceased to give examples of the violence of her temper. In time she became the happy wife of the dark-complexioned young school-master, who had only been waiting until she came to her senses. After all, her ambitious tastes were in some way gratified, for her husband worked steadily and then rose mightily.

Good and true John Drake hoped long, and lived all his life a bachelor. For not only was John Crewe never seen by his relations again, but they also never heard one word of news concerning him; whether he died soon or lived long.

We have women among us who suffer deeply, bear trouble and the memory of it through half a life-time, yet are always patient and uncomplaining. The blight has fallen on their hopes, and—many think—the brightness must have been crushed out of their lives; but they are still smiling and content. Of such was the schoolmistress of Hartle.

FORETASTE.

THE red sun smouldered on the hills,
A dolorous wind went wailing by,
Among the golden daffodils

We walked together—she and I.
I could not meet her trustful glance,
I felt as if my heart would break;
But 'neath some careless utterance
I hid my anguish for her sake.

When next (I thought) the sunlight glows
On shifting cloud and barren tor,
Our little month of bliss shall close,
And life seem lonelier than before;
I chafed against the powers of good
That saw our lives thus wrenched apart;
I turned and pressed her where she stood,
In silence to my troubled heart!

VERNON ISMAY.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. F. THEED.

CHAPTER VI.

PERPLEXITY.

I FOUND them, the following summer, getting on—not well, but as well as could be expected—together. There had come to be a sort of listless patience about Phillis, which was pitiful and pathetic enough, but which was perhaps the best thing possible for her as she was placed. It was only when I questioned her on the subject she spoke of George Lawrence. There had been no news, she said; he might be alive, and he might be dead. She did not think he was dead. Ill news travelled fast, and she fancied she should have heard, one way or another, had anything happened to him. Still, she did not know. It was not likely to make any difference to her now—a-days; and yet, though he was dead to her, she supposed, if she were to hear that death had in truth taken him, she should make a trouble of it. Ah, Phillis, why? If not, that whilst there was life there was hope.

It would, I believe, have struck anybody who might have happened to see Stephen Merritt that night, as it struck me, as a likely thing enough that Phillis's probation would not be a very long one. Partly, no doubt, by way of escaping from the melancholy which pursued him, but in a still greater measure from pure force of habit, and as the result of what had become an unconquerable craving, he drank harder than I had ever yet seen him drink. As he reached his shaking hand out, time after time, for the bottle, and as, little by little, he became, as was his wont in his cups, loud and boastful, I could not help thinking how dreary was the immediate prospect which lay before his daughter, and how next to humanly impossible would it be for her not to watch and wait with a sick heart for that which should give her her release.

By degrees, as the whisky warmed him, the man became communicative. What started him on that particular topic I cannot say, but he

launched forth into violent invectives against the son, of whom he had lost sight so many years, and who had left home in the beginning—I never clearly understood how—under the ban of his father's displeasure. He was alive somewhere, he said—he knew him!—waiting to step into his shoes—ready to come home as soon as the breath was out of his body—to lay hands on everything, and ride roughshod over everybody; but he was out in his reckoning. Cut him off with a shilling indeed! Not a brass farthing of his money should ever find its way into the pockets of a scamp like that, if he knew it! Phillis was a good girl, and Phillis should have it. She had known on which side her bread was buttered (with a tipsy chuckle), and a good thing for her that she had! So on and so forth, for a good hour and more after the subject of his eulogium had taken her sad face up to bed. Sick and weary as I was of him, I was glad of the turn the conversation had taken, as it showed, at any rate, some light on the horizon of that melancholy life of hers.

"It is signed and sealed," he said; "signed and sealed, and it's in the house. Safe under lock and key, eh? Not a bit of it! Safer! Nobody knows where—nobody will know where—not until the time comes, and I tell! But it's safe—quite safe," he kept repeating to himself with tipsy exultation.

At this mention of his will—for though he gave it no name, there could be no doubt that he was referring to it—I pricked up my ears for Phillis's sake. I had heard enough in my time about lost wills, and the mischief which had accrued from them, to feel that a word in season was needed badly here. And yet, who was to attempt to reason with a man in his cups?

"But, surely, somebody knows beside yourself?" I said. "You would defeat your own object if anything were to happen suddenly to you, and nobody could find it after you were gone. Your son would do well then, indeed. He would have nothing to do but to come home, and claim everything."

That argument went home! He was not so far gone, but that he took that in, as I thought he would.

"That's true," he exclaimed. "There's sense there. Two heads are better than one. But it's odd that I never thought of it. I should tell 'em at the end, of course; but—"

He stopped, and passed his hand over his temples, as if trying to collect his senses.

"Take that beastly stuff away!" he said irritably, pushing the whisky bottle feebly from him, "and give me a drink of water. I want to think, d'ye see? I want to think."

"You'll be able to think when you have had a good night's rest," I replied; "not before. Come away to bed now like a Christian, and we will talk all this over, in the morning."

This, after a little querulous resistance, he consented to do; but I woke in the middle of the night, to hear him wandering about his room, which adjoined mine, and wandering out thence on to the landing and down the stairs, stopping—as it seemed to me—now at Phillis's door and now at mine, and only being frightened back into his proper place—as it seemed to me also—by a sudden violent access of coughing, and clearing

my throat, to which I had recourse at last as a species of self-defence.

I talked to him very seriously in the morning, and begged of him to take his lawyer into his confidence. There was a twinkle in his eye when I mentioned his lawyer, which I did not understand at the time—which I came to understand and appreciate afterwards; but he listened with a patience and politeness which I hardly expected of him, and promised to take my advice. It was noticeable that he never offered to make me the repository of his secret. I suppose there had grown upon his mind of late years a certain uncomfortable conviction that there was too strong a sympathy upon my part for the women, whose lot was cast with his, to allow of any very cordial feeling towards himself. Nevertheless, when we parted company at the door of the King's Head at L—, it was with the distinct understanding that he went thence straight to his solicitor's.

This was at midsummer, and I said good-bye to Stephen Merritt that day, for the last time. I was ailing, more or less, all the following winter, and was unable on that account to go my usual round at Christmas; so I heard no more of the Willow Farm and its occupants until upon Good Friday (Easter falling early that year) I received, for the first time in all the years I had known her, a letter from Phillis. Her father, she wrote, had had a paralytic seizure ten days previously, and had died on the ninth day without ever having recovered his speech. She was in great trouble, and sadly in want of advice; and having nobody to whom she could speak so freely, and nobody who had shown so constant an interest in her as myself, she wrote to beg of me to go to her. It is needless to say that if I could have gone I would; but I was myself only just recovering from rheumatic fever, and all that it was in my power to do was to send her word how I was prevented from serving her at that moment, and to ask her to let me know how she was provided for, and whether I should find her still at the Farm later on in the year. To this letter, written not by me but for me, I received no answer. There are times when sorrow makes us selfish, and the only feeling, apparently, that my inability to comply with her request had aroused in Phillis was a sort of sullen disappointment. I was sorry for it, but I could not help it. After a time, when I was able to be my own amanuensis again, I wrote to her myself, as kindly as I knew how, and told her that when I was sufficiently recovered I would, if she wished it, make a journey on purpose to see her. This time she wrote, but it was not the sort of letter to take a man out of his way, no matter how friendly he might wish to be. She was very much obliged, she said (I remember being struck by the stiffness of the wording, so unlike that of the letters I had sent her)—she was very much obliged, but there was nothing I could do for her now, and she begged that I would not think of going to see her, as her plans were so unsettled, that whether she should be at the Willow Farm at the time I named it was impossible for her to say. She was sorry I was ill, and she hoped I should soon be better. Of any wish on her part to see me in the future, of any regret that we should be—of which her letter seemed to hold out a probability—losing sight of each other altogether after so many years, not a word. Had I not known her so well, I

should have been hurt and offended; as it was, I was neither one nor the other; I was only greatly concerned. Somehow or other I felt sure things had gone wrong with her. She was not, to do her justice, the woman to cast off in her prosperity the friends of her adversity. It was not because she was happier and better off than I had hitherto known her she was giving me the cold shoulder. No, no!

Well, this was at the end of April. Not later than Midsummer I should be making my Yorkshire round. I should then, if I did not succeed in seeing Phillis—and I had little doubt in my own mind, in spite of anything she had written, or could write, that I should see her—at least, have an opportunity of hearing how she was circumstanced, and whither she had gone. So I decided to bide my time until then. Having once made up my mind thus, I gave little or no more thought to Phillis Merritt, until one evening, early in June, she was suddenly recalled to my mind in this way. I was staying one night at a small provincial town where I knew nobody, and there was nothing to do or see. The day had been wet, and the evening was chilly; the landlord was an oaf, without two ideas in his head, and the barmaid had red eyes and a headache. The commercial room was bad enough, for it had nobody in it; but I preferred my own society to that of those two, and I was not disposed to turn out; so I took the only paper I had not read already—a *New York Herald* three weeks old, and for want of anything better to do, "spelt" that. In the column corresponding to that which the ladies have christened in the *Times* "the agony column," I found this:—

"If Richard Merritt, who in June 1854 left his home with the intention of proceeding to South America, and has not since been heard of, is still living, he is informed that his father has died intestate, and he is requested to communicate at once with Mr. Benjamin Needham, solicitor, R—"

This was what first caught my eye, and immediately below it there was a second advertisement, addressed to parish clerks and others, offering a reward for a certificate of the death of the aforesaid Richard Merritt, &c.

Died intestate! That Stephen Merritt never had done! He had made a will, to my certain knowledge, and could there be any doubt he had left one. Unless—as the one contingency which seemed possible to my mind rose in it, I felt as if I must put my things into my bag, and set off that moment for the Willow Farm, to ask the question and arrive at the truth—unless Phillis had in some way managed to offend him mortally before he died. It was not probable: after her years of patient probation—after the sacrifice she had made, and the hopes she had relinquished—it was most improbable; and yet, if the will had been destroyed, it had not been destroyed without a motive. If it had not, what had become of it? I flattered myself I had frightened Merritt too effectually as to the result of his secreting it, for him to have persisted in *that*; and so, for the time being, I put entirely on one side the most probable elucidaion of all. It was certain there could have been no reconciliation between father and son, for had the prodigal returned in proper prodigal fashion, there would have been no need

to advertise for him now. It was not he who had come of his own accord between Phillis and her hard-won inheritance, but Fortune, which in some unexplained manner had played into his hand, and cruelly abandoned her. It was evident now what she had meant by saying that she could not possibly tell me whether the summer would find her at the Farm or not. Supposing her half-brother to be still in the land of the living, did it not stand to reason that he would return at any rate for a time to arrange his affairs, and how was it possible to calculate on the result of such a return to her? I had heard little at any time of Richard Merritt, and though that little had been altogether against him, I had taken it, and was still disposed to take it, whence it came—that is to say, with very considerable reservations. But good or bad, generous or ungenerous, whatever he might prove to be, I felt sure that neither to him nor to anybody living would Phillis, if she could help it, deign to be beholden. True, if he had not married and should decide to remain at the Farm, she might earn her bread there, as easily as elsewhere, as his house-keeper. But failing that, what was to become of her? Now indeed the time had come to which her mother had looked forward with so terrible an anxiety, and where were the means for providing against the calamity? I could almost have wished, seeing I was powerless in the matter, I had never chanced on the advertisement at all. Fortunately for my own peace of mind, I was due at R— within a few days of that time, and having written to inform Phillis of the probable date of my visit, I found on my arrival there a note from the latter to the effect that she was at home, and that there would be, as usual, a bed for me.

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN.

It was between four and five o'clock on a glorious June afternoon when I lifted the latch of the garden gate, and walked up to the open door of the farm-house. It was not—as I have already said—a pretty house. In winter it was desperately bleak and bare in its almost sunless hollow; but in summer, when the roses and honeysuckle were in bloom, and the garden, which was Phillis's one pleasure, was gay with hardy old-fashioned flowers, growing in great clusters and patches, the place was not deficient in a certain homeliness, and the beauty which comes of that. I could fancy her being sorry to leave it at that season; and yet what had it been to her all her life but a prison, in which all the sweetness and beauty of her youth had been wasted? There was no bell, and I did not stop to knock at the door, but walked straight in, as I had done many a time before, at the open door of the parlour. In the deep window-sill of that room, looking out on the bee-hives and the garden, had been the young mistress's favourite seat, and here I half-expected to find her. She was not there, though some white work she had been busy upon lay in her place; but I had scarcely time to note her absence when I heard the gentlest motion in the world behind me, and that pleasant voice of hers, which not all the discord which had come into her

life had ever availed to put out of tune, greeted and bade me welcome. It was a pleasure to hear her once more; but to see her? In the sight of such a shadow of her old self as that which I now saw—in the sight of that white drawn face and those dim eyes, with the dark shadows under them—was there not more pain than pleasure? It was a very long time since she had looked either well or happy—I did not need to be reminded of that; but never in my knowledge of her had she looked like this. Things had assuredly gone from bad to worse with her, since I saw her last. I said nothing; but my face was too true an index of my thoughts for her not to fathom them.

"Am I really such a scarecrow" she asked with a sad little laugh, "that I frighten you too? Mattie calls me a bag of bones, and I don't think I am much better. I suppose one can go on living so just the same. I feel as if I should live for ever, only I am not very certain where or how. But that does not matter. Only don't keep looking at me like that! I don't like it. Come and sit down, and tell me about yourself. What was that fever you had, and are you quite well of it?"

"Yes," I said, I was quite well of it, and she made me tell her all about it—how I caught it and where, and by whom I was nursed, and how far I was advanced in my convalescence when I received the letter telling me of her father's death, and whether or not I was greatly surprised at the news of it.

"No," I said, "I was not so surprised as I should have been had I not seen so great a change in him a year ago. I thought very badly of him then; I did not think he was going the right way to live long."

She shook her head mournfully.

"He got much worse after that," she said. "He grew very odd and suspicious—suspicious of me and everybody. Do you know he watched the post-man, so that no letters might come without his seeing them, and it was so absurd, because there never were any—not once a month, excepting for himself—bills and things. Nobody ever writes to me but Katie Simmons, who was at school with me. He took to locking his drawers up too, and packing up his clothes, and putting them away, so that I should not know where to get at them. I cannot think what it was he had taken into his head. Sometimes I fancied, and I do still fancy, he was afraid I should try and get together enough money to run away and leave him. I don't think he ever felt sure of me, or comfortable about me, after mother's death. He would lay hands on first one thing, then another—things that he thought might have been taken away without his missing them or remembering them, for he said so, once—for fear I should sell them. There was an old man who used to come, a pedlar—old clothes we have given him often and often, mother and I, but we never got money for them; of course not—a piece of stuff for a dress, or a length of ribbon, or something of that sort, as people do generally. The last time he came, father set the dogs on him. It was a wonder the man got off with the fright and nothing worse. But I can't tell you the half of it. I grew frightened of him at last, though I had been used to him all my life, and you know how fond he used to be of me once."

(To be continued.)

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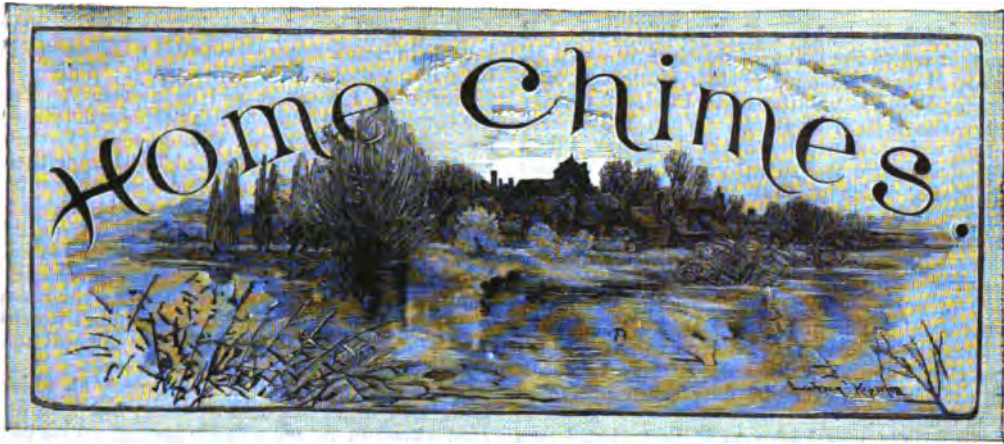
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A GHOSTLY ATONEMENT.

BY H. E. CLARKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST APPEARANCE.

MINE was supposed by most people to be an enviable lot—for I was young, rich, and without encumbrances. I painted wall, too, for a wealthy man—was counted a judge of pictures, had the nucleus of a decent collection in my country house, and knew everybody worth knowing.

But with all these advantages, I was, at the time of which I write, one of the most miserable of men. For no earthly reason that I, or anyone else, could discover, the zest went utterly out of life for me. I was nervous and depressed—I seemed to be living in the shadow of some impending calamity; I lost all interest in what was going on around me. Yet I had no ache nor pain, nor, so far as I could perceive, any physical malady to account for this state of things. At the urgent request of my friends, however, I went to see a physician, recommended especially as "a good all-round man," I remember. This gentleman was a painfully conscientious member of his inscrutable craft. He stethoscoped nearly every square inch of me; he tapped, he kneaded, he prodded, and he pounded me; he put metal things into my mouth, and stared down my throat till I choked. I believe he turned my eyes round between his thumb and finger to look at the back of them. He took my temperature, he sphygmographed me, he got out a lens and spent much of his valuable time in inspecting a small mole on my left shoulder. Then he said, with an air of profound wisdom, that my nervous system was completely out of order—by which I knew that he had not been able to find anything wrong

with me. I replied I was aware that I had inherited a nervous temperament, but that there were certain curious symptoms connected with my present condition which I could not believe to be merely nervous. For instance, I said, I had heard of people being haunted by most things, but never in my recollection had I heard of anybody haunted by an odour. Yet I was oppressed sometimes for an hour at a time by a peculiar damp, earthy, vault-like smell—a reminiscence of graveyards, and catacombs, and charnel-houses, which directed my mind, with most unpleasant persistence, to thoughts of my latter end. The odour, I added, was always accompanied by a rushing, roaring sound in my ears.

The doctor did not smile—great doctors never smile, because it does not pay—he only nodded as though he had fully expected these symptoms to be present, and murmured, "Quite clear—quite clear. Morbidly sensitive condition—one of the Protean forms of hypochondria—nothing to be alarmed about," and so on. To sum up, if I would use his prescription, go to bed at ten, get up at seven, never eat or drink anything that I liked, and above all, come to see him again in a fortnight, I should probably soon be all right. I had no intention of following his directions in any way, but I gave him two guineas, and bowed myself out as though I was perfectly satisfied, and I rejoice to say I have never seen the great man since.

I then consulted a doctor great at mental disorders, and he wished to put me into his private asylum. After that I tried a teetotal doctor, who assured me that I was poisoning myself by taking a glass of whisky and water at night: and then no less than five general practitioners, who recommended—the first, riding; the second, walking; the third, perfect rest; while the fourth asserted that I was incurable, and must soon die; and the fifth that there was nothing whatever the matter with me.

Then I gave up doctors, and, at the suggestion of my friend Easy, took to football, gymnastics,

and underdone steaks; and when this course had brought me to the point of death, I reversed it, and tried backgammon, woollen comforters, and gruel. It did not matter what I did, my malady got worse instead of better. When I first consulted a doctor, which was in February, I had been for about a month subject to these curious symptoms, which at that time recurred on an average twice or three times a week; but in the summer I had them nearly every day; besides which I began to think that I was sometimes followed about by an invisible attendant. In the solitude of my own room, too, I heard deep-drawn sighs as of one in great mental anguish, and the abiding impression on my mind on these occasions was that someone wanted desperately to speak with me, but was over and over again prevented from doing so.

My friends now began to suspect that I was going crazy, and I was inclined to fear they might be right.

About this time, I chanced to meet little Honeywood, an old schoolfellow of mine, whom I had not seen for some years, and whom I remembered as a bright, witty, wicked fellow enough. He had grown a pale, studious-looking man, with keen thoughtful eyes.

"You are altered very much," he said, observing me curiously.

"And you," I replied. "But I suppose you are going to say how ill I look? If so, don't."

"No," he said in an absent tone, "not ill, but awakening."

"What on earth do you mean?" I asked, rather fearing that Honeywood would next present me with a tract, and ask me to attend some Little Bethel, whereof he was pastor.

He did not reply directly. "Do you believe in spiritualism, as it is called?" he asked.

"Not I," I answered scornfully.

"And yet you are on the verge," he began. Then he broke off abruptly, and said, "Have you seen or heard anything curious or difficult of explanation lately?"

"Good gracious," I exclaimed, "I have seen and heard little else," and I poured out my tale without more preface. He was pleased and interested, but in no way surprised; he only nodded once or twice, saying, "Yes—go on," when I showed signs of breaking off before my story was done.

"And now," I said, when I had finished, "what is the matter with me? Am I going mad?"

"There is nothing the matter with you," he said, "all that you have told me is quite natural and right. I knew something of the kind had been happening, or was about to happen to you, directly I saw you. Something is wanted of you; the invisible world has need of you in some way. You are on the brink of a manifestation."

"My dear Honeywood," I said, do you mean to tell me that you believe in this gibberish? Have you been taken in by "Sludge the Medium," with his table-turning, banjo-playing, and the rest of the second-rate conjuring tricks? Is Saul indeed among the prophets?"

He smiled, a rather forced smile. "I don't believe in any conjuring tricks," he said, "and I am not concerned about table-turning or banjo-playing; but I do believe in an invisible world always about us, with which we have far more to

do than most people imagine, and which may become in some degree evident to the senses of some of us at any rate if necessary. With you, for instance, I think it will be necessary. You are sceptical, and what foolish people call "strong minded," which is often, saving your presence, another name for "pig-headed." Though these "symptoms" as you call them have tormented you so long, and though you have not been able to relieve them in any way, your pride is too great to allow you to own that they are altogether out of your power and beyond your comprehension. You persist in looking upon them as the result of subjective physical causes. I shouldn't wonder if you had consulted some of your medical materialists about them?"

I did not reply to this last thrust, at which, however, I could not help wincing; but I rallied Honeywood in rather a feeble fashion on his conversion, and asked him how it came about.

"I will tell you one of these days," he replied, "and if I am not mistaken, you will before long be prepared to listen to me without laughing."

I replied that I should indeed be much altered in that case, and we parted. But the interview had made more impression on me than I cared to admit, even to myself, and I could not forget it. What could the invisible world want with me? And what sort of manifestation was I to behold? I laughed at the idea of spirits needing my assistance. I furnished up all my rusty armoury of arguments against ghosts, with a wish, as I could not but see, to convince myself of the truth of what I pretended I had never doubted—namely, that there are no such things. But I only succeeded in unsettling myself altogether, as people who want to convince themselves too much very often do.

I noticed one curious change in my condition after this conversation. For a whole week I was quite untroubled by any of my "symptoms," and I began to think they were gone for good and all.

But one night, I came home rather late to my chambers, and had just got to the foot of the stairs (my rooms being on the first floor), when I heard the far-off whirr which always preceded an attack, and then it rose to the old roaring rushing noise, and the pungent indescribable odour floated up more over-poweringly than ever. I ran quickly upstairs, unlocked my door, entered my room, and proceeded to strike a light. Before the match ignited, I was astonished to see that there was a person sitting in my armchair before the window; a faint gleam of moonlight fell upon his legs.

"Who is there?" I asked loudly, and at the same moment, the match flared up, and went out.

But I had seen enough, I gave one great cry, and for the first and only time in my life fainted dead away.

It was my old friend Harry Lockhart who sat in my armchair, and there were three very good reasons why I was surprised to see him there. Firstly, he had played me what I conceived was a very scurvy trick in getting engaged to a girl I had introduced him to, and told him I intended to marry. Secondly, he had died suddenly while on a continental tour three years before. Thirdly, he wore a knotted rope twisted tightly round his neck, and his face had the swollen, discoloured

appearance which is usual after death from strangulation.

When I came to myself I was lying on the sofa, and the man who lived in the rooms above mine was holding smelling salts to my nose. My easy chair was empty.

"Did you see him?" I whispered. "Was he here when you came?"

"There was no one here," he said, "but yourself. What had happened to you? I never heard such a frightful scream. It gave me a worse start than I ever had before in my life."

"A friend of mine who has been dead more than three years was sitting in that chair when I came in," I replied in a matter-of-fact tone, "and naturally I was surprised to see him."

"Ah—yes," said the man with a rather puzzled air; "optical illusion, I suppose, or something of that sort. I remember now," he added more briskly, "that when I came in I noticed the moonlight falling on the chair, and thought it looked rather as if someone were sitting there. Let's turn down the gas and try it again."

I thanked him heartily, but altogether declined the offer. I was quite satisfied with what I had seen.

I was soon sufficiently recovered to get up and walk about a little, and then my visitor said he must be going. I would not be left in the room alone however, so he waited until I had found my handbag and filled it with such things as I required for the night, and then we parted on the stairs, he returning with a thoughtful expression of countenance to his own chambers, and I flying through the midnight streets to the noisiest and most sleepless hotel I could think of.

CHAPTER II.

A BAD NIGHTMARE.

THIS unpleasant adventure altered the whole course of my life. I could not endure my chambers any longer. I determined to travel, and as none of my friends could—or would—arrange to accompany me, and as at the same time they objected to my going alone, "while in such a precarious state of health," as they phrased it, I advertised for a travelling companion.

It should not, one would think, have been a very difficult matter to find just such a person as I wanted, for the links that bound us together were to be of the lightest and slightest. The route was to be arranged between us before starting, but might be modified within certain limits as we proceeded. We were to hire a good courier, and travelling and hotel expenses were of course to be divided. But if, after starting we found the arrangement irksome, two days' notice from either party was to dissolve it.

But though I had plenty of answers to the advertisement, and several interviews with my correspondents, my negotiations failed, time after time, in the most disheartening way. One gentleman was quite ready to go until he saw me; then he respectfully declined. Another took a great liking for me personally, and only wanted all my

arrangements altered. A third was the very man I was looking for, and the business was practically settled when he was taken suddenly ill. A fourth, who seemed to promise well, turned out to be the agent for a patent medicine, who was travelling with a view to introduce his nostrum in the colonies; and so on through a round dozen or so. There remained at last nothing for it but to take Grimston or go alone. I was for the latter course, my friends were for the former. Grimston had answered the advertisement early, and had fallen in with all my arrangements at once. He seemed indeed eager to go; and there was nothing against him, except that I didn't like him. He was a gentlemanly fellow enough, slightly older than myself, and with a rather military bearing. His countenance was I believe considered handsome, but I took leave to demur to his eyes. They had the hard bleak look of gray granite, and there was a distinct trace of cat in them. I hate cats, and I hated Grimston. I had put him off from time to time in the hope of being able to tell him that I was engaged to someone else, or of convincing him that I didn't want him, without the disagreeable necessity of telling him so, but he persevered and his perseverance was rewarded.

Urged by my friends to overcome what must after all be only a prejudice, and impressed by Grimston's evident wish to do all he could to please me, I foolishly abandoned instinct, and reasoned myself into the belief that I should like him better when I came to know him. So the bargain was struck, and we started together for the continent.

Just before we left, I fell in with Honeywood, much, I confess, to my annoyance; for I had been persuaded by my friends that if Honeywood had not plied me with his jargon about "manifestations" I should never have seen Lockhart in my armchair. And besides, I did not wish to say anything to him on the subject, because I knew he would at once conclude that his prophecy had been fulfilled, which thought made me the more angry as I certainly had grave misgivings that that it might be true. So, on meeting him, I put as bold a face upon the matter as possible, and said I was well, and was going for a holiday on the continent, where I expected to enjoy myself much.

Honeywood watched me narrowly while I was speaking, and then said.

"Yes, I see you are better in one way; the manifestation has occurred, and you have not since been troubled with those curious symptoms you spoke to me about. But I advise you to be careful; these phenomena are not meaningless; be on the look-out."

"I don't wish to be rude," I said, "but to tell the truth this oracular moonshine of yours is unpleasant to me. If I did not know you well I should be inclined to think you were taking advantage of my weak state of health to play upon my nerves."

"Don't be angry," he said gently, "I won't say any more about it. I think things will come right in the end, and then you will perhaps be ready to admit that you have misjudged me." And so we parted.

I was more angry than ever after leaving him. How had he got to know that the "manifestation" as he called it, had taken place? How had he got to know (what was quite true) that the

unpleasant symptoms had since then ceased? I came to the conclusion that Honeywood was a humbug, which seemed somehow to account for everything, though I didn't quite see how, and I decided that I would cut him in future.

Grimston showed himself a most indefatigable man, with a vast talent for organisation. He took all the trouble of the preliminary arrangements upon himself, and anybody would have thought that instead of travelling merely as an equal and friend, he was my private secretary and factotum.

The engagement of the courier may be taken as a case in point. Probably, he remarked, I knew a courier whom I would like to employ. If I would give him the address he would write at once. I did so, but unfortunately my courier was engaged. Gone away with an American family, Grimston said, but he had mislaid the letter, and could tell me no more. I suggested that we should try one of the offices that supply couriers, and Grimston at once did so. One or two very second-rate individuals presented themselves, and were rejected. Then it struck me that I had not asked Grimston if he had anybody to recommend. One would have thought he would have mentioned it before had this been the case, but I knew how very loth he was to appear to influence me in the least. When I asked he said dubiously that he had been thinking about it for some time, and could not think of anybody that he would care to take the responsibility of recommending, but he had a friend, who had been a great traveller, and with my permission he would consult him. This resulted in the appearance of a dapper little Frenchman named Alphonse, who called upon me one morning when I was alone, and who seemed to me the very man. In fact I had nearly engaged him when Grimston came in.

To my surprise, after a hasty glance at the man, he looked dissatisfied—asked him two or three questions with what I thought unnecessary roughness, shrugged his shoulders at the answers, and saying:

"Oh, well, we'll let you know our decision by post," dismissed Alphonse abruptly.

"What's your objection to the man?" I asked, when we were alone; "he seemed to me to suit admirably."

Grimston didn't think he looked straightforward.

I thought he did.

Grimston questioned whether he knew his business.

I remarked that I had already satisfied myself on that score.

Grimston instantly begged my pardon, and owned he was in the wrong. He had every confidence in the friend who recommended Alphonse, and every confidence in my judgment also. He would write and engage him there and then.

I felt it my duty to demur now, and say that I didn't want to force anybody upon him, and we had an amicable wrangle, which ended in our engaging Alphonse for a month on trial. About that month there is little or nothing to tell. We went first to Paris, where, as I had first seen her in that city, I gave myself up to the luxury of grieving over my lost love, Florence Eversley. Quite lost to me I considered her, for though

Lockhart was dead, I was far too proud to marry a girl who had become engaged to a friend of mine, after giving me what I could not but consider distinct encouragement.

No; she was very beautiful, well educated, intelligent—what you will. But a man does not care to marry a woman who could do such a thing as that.

I had not heard a word of her since the day Lockhart told me rather boastfully of his good luck, and we had the violent quarrel which separated us, as it afterwards turned out, for ever. Now I wandered about Paris, and the past lived again, and the gay, beautiful city was full of her; and my heart ached with an exquisite pain that was better than pleasure.

But enough of this. We wandered on to Venice, and then to Rome, and both Grimston and Alphonse were so solicitous about my comfort that I had no trouble of any sort, and gradually my prejudice against my companion wore away. The distraction and excitement did me a great deal of good, and I considered myself quite restored to health, and determined to treat the remainder of the tour as a pleasure-trip only.

Alphonse's engagement was of course renewed. He did not get on quite so well with Grimston as I should have liked, but to me he was indispensable.

My passion for art, which my illness had kept in abeyance, began to assert itself again, and most of my time was spent in picture-galleries and studios. It became evident to me that this would be the best time to add largely to my collection, and after consulting with Grimston, I determined to write home for remittances to the amount of two thousand pounds for this purpose. I had intended at first only to spend half this sum, but Grimston pointed out that a thousand pounds would not go very far, and that he himself, though a comparatively poor man, desired to have a few hundred pounds' worth of pictures chosen by so capable a judge, as a memento of our tour, and it would save trouble and expense to get the larger sum at once.

Grimston offered to procure a draft from his bankers for £500 for his share; but I demurred, thinking it would be easier to arrange in London, when all expenses were paid, and a regular account could be rendered to him. And I was not sorry to set my companion this slight example of liberality, for I had noticed that he was almost penurious in his extreme exactitude.

It was only a few hours after this business had been settled, as I was returning to our hotel through the gathering dusk, that I saw a man in a small dark by-street violently beckoning to me. It was too dark for me really to distinguish the figure, and yet it seemed familiar. While he beckoned to me with one hand he pointed with the other to a half-open window near which he was standing. I judged from the urgency of his gestures that some accident had happened, or some crime had been committed behind this window, and I wondered why the man was silent. I began to walk towards him, but his gestures grew more vehement, until, infected by his manifest excitement, I set myself to run. Seeing this, the man rushed to the window and stood for a few seconds in the crouching attitude of a listener with one hand over his ear.

Just as I reached the spot panting and expectant, I turned my head to see if I was followed. When I looked again at the window the man was gone, and I was to all appearance alone in the street. It was odd, but I had no time to think of it; in an instant, and without any sort of reflection, I was crouching by the window in the precise attitude of the listener I had seen. This is what I heard:

"How have you got on?" asked a voice that sounded strangely like Alphonse's.

"Splendidly, my old cockalorum," replied another voice that astonished me by its resemblance to Grimston's. "It is all arranged; nothing can be better. If there's no hitch, it ought to be all over in a week, and we safe in Spain or wherever you like."

Here the voices sank to whispers, and at last suddenly ceased before I could hear another word.

I pursued my interrupted journey to the hotel in a condition of mind difficult to describe; but before I had gone far it struck me that I ought to have waited to make sure of the identity of the speakers. After all, I might easily have been mistaken.

I retraced my steps, but found the window closed; and though I lingered about the place for some time, I neither saw nor heard anything more that was of interest to me.

When I reached the hotel Alphonse was on the look-out for me at the door, and said Mr. Grimston was waiting dinner.

"How long has he been in?" I asked.

"But he has not been out, monsieur," exclaimed Alphonse, with an astonished raising of shoulders and eyebrows and a turning outward of the palms of both hands.

I pushed past him, and going upstairs walked straight into our dining-room. Grimston, who was reading a paper, rose with an air of relief.

"Ah, now we will have dinner," he cried cheerfully.

"That liar Alphonse says you have not been out this afternoon," I exclaimed.

Grimston looked astonished, as well he might, at this abrupt address, and there was a brief pause. Then he replied with a laugh—

"Even liars sometimes tell the truth, and Alphonse has done so in this instance. I have been writing letters ever since you went out. But, what is the matter? You look disturbed."

I was on the point of telling him the exact truth as to what had happened, when an overwhelming conviction of the utter absurdity of my story broke in upon me and kept me silent.

Who could say to this haughty aristocrat—"I thought I heard you call our courier 'old cockalorum'?"

Even if there had been no mystery of a beckoning man in question, I could not have done it.

I said I thought I had met him in the street a little while before, and turned the conversation as soon as possible.

After dinner, when my equanimity was restored, and I was lazily smoking a cigarette over my coffee, I was very glad I had been so circumspect. It seemed strange that I should have thought of telling anyone such a rigmorole, and ere long I even began to doubt whether I had ever believed it myself.

Grimston, on the sofa, was rapidly going to

sleep; his newspaper slid to the floor, his breathing grew regular, the room became darker and darker, and gradually my breathing grew regular too. I dreamt that Florence was vehemently beckoning me to come to her; but she was on the bank of a wide river, which flowed between us, and when I prepared to swim across I found it was blood.

A stifled shriek from Grimston awoke me. Good heavens! what was happening? The room was now very dark, but I could see a figure I was quite familiar with—namely, that of Harry Lockhart, bending over the sofa twisting something tightly round the sleeper's neck. In a moment it flashed upon me that the man who had beckoned me in the street that afternoon was the same, and I wondered I had not recognised him at once.

Grimston was groaning and turning uneasily from side to side as if struggling to free himself, but he seemed powerless in the grasp of his adversary. I sprang to his assistance with a cry, and in an instant the apparition had disappeared, and Grimston awoke.

"Take him away! take him away!" he screamed. "Don't you see he is throttling me? Take him away, for heaven's sake."

Then he jumped up and glared around him.

"Light, light!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "He may be in the room still." And then he fell back upon the couch, and, burying his face in his hand, sobbed aloud. When I had lighted the gas he recovered a little.

"I have had an awful nightmare," he said shuddering. "I—I expect it was that piece of cheese I had at dinner. Ugh!"

"You dreamt some one was throttling you," I remarked.

"How do you know?" he asked abruptly.

"You said so," I replied. "What sort of a man was he? Old or young?"

"How should I know?" he snarled, showing temper for the first time since I had known him. "What's the good of cross-examining a man about a nightmare?"

I was about to reply, when Alphonse entered.

"Monsieur is ill?" he queried, looking at Grimston as I thought with savage contempt. "Can I do anything for monsieur?"

"You can go to the devil," growled Grimston, turning his back.

"Monsieur is pleased to be polite," retorted the courier, in what was undoubtedly a most offensive tone; "but I can excuse him in consideration of his—affliction."

"You are impertinent, Alphonse," I said; "you had better go, we shall not want you any more till morning."

He bowed most obsequiously to me and departed, and I heard him on the stairs outside humming a tune from a comic opera.

I spent a wretched, sleepless night, and there is no particular good in concealing the fact that I was horribly alarmed. Was Honeywood then right after all? Was I being warned by all these unaccountable occurrences that I was in danger? Were these two men in a plot against me? Or, on the other hand, was I only the victim of disordered nerves and an inflamed imagination?

There was much to be said on both sides, and mentally I said it all, and was farther than ever off a decision when it was finished. If I could

without trouble have got rid of both my companions then and there, I doubt not I should have done it; but the thing was not so easy. We had been together some time, and had got on well; all our arrangements for the next few months were made, and certainly a satisfactory explanation must be forthcoming if I seceded at this late period. But I had no such explanation to offer. At length I decided that I would stand or fall by the truth or falsehood of my experience of the afternoon. If, after the strictest examination, I found that Grimston and Alphonse had not been out, I would adjudge myself the victim of hallucinations, put myself out of court, and say no more on the subject. But if I discovered that my companions had deceived me, I would part company with them at once. And, having arrived at this conclusion, I fell asleep as dawn was breaking.

Honeywood tells me I here made the fatal mistake of setting up my own feeble and purblind reason to decide upon matters entirely beyond its jurisdiction, and above its comprehension, and that the punishment I incurred was due to this presumption of mine. Whether he is right or not I must leave the reader to judge. I have only to do with the facts, which are as follows:—I made a most searching secret inquiry in the hotel next morning, and proved beyond a doubt that neither Grimston nor Alphonse had left it during all the time of my absence.

Therefore, in accordance with the compact made with myself over night, I made no alteration in my plans, but proceeded in every way as if the incident had never occurred.

Grimston apologised profusely for his behaviour of the previous evening, hoped I had not been alarmed, could not quite account for it, was not subject to nightmare, but would take care that such a thing never occurred again.

And so the affair was passed over for the time.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAST APPEARANCE.

BUT these things had quite spoil the Eternal City for me. I became unsettled and gloomy, and when Grimston taxed me with my altered behaviour, I told him I was heartily sick of Rome, and wished I was anywhere else in the world.

"By all means let us leave at once," he said; "but where shall we go?"

I didn't know, and I didn't care. I proposed we should travel south by easy stages, stopping when the fancy took us, and going on again when we were tired of stopping.

This idea seemed to please Grimston mightily, and I could not help thinking that his nightmare had sickened him too of Rome. He had never recovered his old spirits, he was often irritable and morose, and once or twice he quarrelled with Alphonse in a quite undignified way. So we only waited until my money arrived, and then, deferring our purchases until our return journey, started forthwith.

The first night we spent at a small town some fifty miles from Rome, the name of which I have forgotten, and the next day we did not start again on our purposeless journey until evening. We

had dined very well—Grimston, I thought, a little too well, for his face was much flushed, and his eyes were bloodshot. At the station he said thickly that he "would like Alphonse to travel with us if I had no objection, for this once," and I gave my consent, being rather glad not to be left alone with a drunken companion.

I had got into the carriage and Grimston was following, when he suddenly became very pale, and with his eyes fixed on one of the corner seats, said unsteadily:

"Let us get into an empty carriage."

"There is no one here," I said.

"Yes," said Grimston, with a scared look on his face, "I can't travel with him. He will be trying to strangle me again;" and he pointed to the empty seat.

"Monsieur must get in, or be left behind," said Alphonse, roughly, and fairly shouldered him into the carriage. And it was well he did so, for we were off the next moment.

"Monsieur is again not well," sneered Alphonse. "How it is unfortunate."

Grimston made no reply; he sat as far as possible from the seat he had pointed to, and he was huddled together as if in mortal fear.

"Monsieur is in need of medicine," remarked Alphonse, opening a travelling bag and producing a flask which he handed to Grimston. "Ah! that is not enough then—drink it all—it will do you good."

"Do you want to make the man drunker than he is?" I asked.

"You lie; I am sober," said Grimston, glaring at me; and having drained the flask, he tossed it out of the window. The stuff—whatever it was—worked an immediate change in his condition; he became boastful and merry, and laughed and sang loudly.

"I may as well tell you," I said to Alphonse, "that I don't propose to travel with this man any more after to-night."

In my own mind I thought this behaviour of Grimston's offered me exactly the chance I had been looking for to break up the party at once. But it turned out that I was a little too late.

"No more!" shouted Grimston, with a burst of laughter; "never again after to-night! No, my chicken, nor with anyone else—do you hear?"

"I shall leave you at the next station," I said to Alphonse, feeling some vague terror seize me.

Alphonse smiled a strange smile. "Monsieur mistakes—it will be a little before that," he said, with a nod.

Even as he spoke, the train plunged with a shriek into a tunnel. The windows were down; the damp, vault-like odour filled the carriage; the roaring, rushing noise stunned my ears; I seemed to know that my doom was upon me. This then was the catastrophe toward which I had been tending for the last twelve months. In uncontrollable horror I rose from my seat, but instantly my two companions flung themselves upon me, and almost before I knew what had happened I was gagged and bound hand and foot. Then Grimston put his hand in my breast-pocket and took out my pocket-book, containing the draft and the rest of my money.

"Quick," he said to Alphonse. "Open the door. We must have him out before we get to the end of the tunnel."

"It is a long tunnel," said Alphonse, sulkily. "Let me see how much there is in the pocket-book."

"We will divide afterwards," urged Grimston. "There is no time to be lost. Open the door I tell you."

Alphonse, cursing under his breath, leant out of the window, and began to fumble with the handle outside.

A sudden thought struck Grimston; he stooped as though to pick something from the floor, and seized the courier's legs, just above the ankle. There was a brief but furious struggle, for Alphonse took in the state of affairs at once, but Grimston had all the advantages on his side. Slowly but surely he hoisted his accomplice from the floor, and then with one mighty effort sent him shrieking into the pitchy darkness of the tunnel.

"That serves the surly brute right, and saves the trouble of dividing," he remarked, turning to me, "and now my good sir, you must follow our friend with as little delay as possible."

"I am glad to be rid of that rascal," he went on, talking to himself as he examined my pocket-book; "he was useful, but he knew too much, and he has done nothing but bully me all through this little job. After all, he was dull too, he was only good for routine work. He had no real genius. It would never have occurred to him to pitch me out of the window. One had to teach him everything, and he was infernally avaricious."

He was satisfied with his inspection, and at length put the pocket-book away. I knew my doom would not be much longer delayed, but I could not loosen the cords, struggle as I might, and I was nearly choked with the gag.

"Your friend Lockhart put us up to this," he said, buttoning his coat over his chest. "The late Alphonse and I met him in Venice, where he was engaged in drinking himself to death, and in his maudlin moods he was always talking of you. He had been refused by some girl he wanted to marry,—some girl who was fond of you,—but he made you believe she had accepted him. You seem to have been always a fool."

My heart stood still a moment, and then began to pound away at a sickening rate. There was no bitterness in death then that I was not to taste! I made one more despairing effort to free myself, but it was perfectly useless.

"I might have got more," he proceeded meditatively, "if I had gone back to London with you, but there would have been greater risk, and a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. I will be satisfied. Come my friend, it is quite time for you to go."

He began to drag me by the legs toward the open door. And then, for the first time, I noticed that we were not alone. Lockhart was in the corner seat to which Grimston had pointed on entering the carriage.

His appearance was much the same as when I first saw him in my armchair, but there was one remarkable difference. The knotted rope was untwisted from his neck, and was lying on the seat beside him. As Grimston, bending over me, absorbed in his task, drew me slowly towards the open door, the Thing rose, and passing the rope quickly round the assassin's neck, began to twist it tight. Grimston noticed nothing at first, but

in a few seconds his flushed face grew darker, he relinquished his hold of me, put both hands to his throat with an agonised gesture, and choked,—but the twisting did not cease. His face grew black,—his eyes seemed ready to start from their sockets—his tongue lolled horribly from his mouth,—and with the most frightful sound I ever heard from human lips, he fell upon his face, the blood oozing slowly from his ears and mouth.

The horror of the scene was too much for me, and I lost consciousness, but the last thing I saw was the figure of Lockhart stooping over the prostrate body, still pitilessly twisting the knotted cord tighter and tighter about Grimston's neck.

I have told this story to many people, but I can see that, with few exceptions, they entirely disbelieve the supernatural part of it. They point out that Grimston is known to have died of apoplexy, brought on by violent exertion after a heavy dinner; and though there is no doubt that he and Alphonse had all along been in a conspiracy to rob and murder me, as indeed the latter confessed, before he died in the hospital, they do not think it was by any supernatural means that I was led to suspect them.

When I ask, But how about my old friend Lockhart, seen on so many occasions, and whom Alphonse confessed that they murdered three years before by strangling him with a knotted rope?—my friends smile with an exasperating air of superiority, and remark that it is odd that I never saw him until Honeywood set me on the look-out for a supernatural appearance, and that even then I did not mention, until long afterwards, that it was Lockhart whom I saw.

They add, very kindly, that they do not for a moment believe I am wilfully trying to deceive them, but they think these painful occurrences have so unstrung a naturally nervous and sensitive temperament, that I am to be excused if my account is not only exaggerated and highly coloured, but positively inaccurate in several important particulars; especially where I have (unconsciously of course), used knowledge acquired since the tragedy, as though it had been revealed to me by supernatural means beforehand. They instance my naming the apparition Lockhart, and my mention of the knotted rope about his neck.

In a word, they think that Honeywood's words made a deep impression on me, and caused me to be much frightened by a ray of moonlight on an armchair, and that from that time I did not give common sense a chance. But I refuse to insult my readers' understanding by transcribing more of such malicious nonsense as this.

I went to Honeywood, and told him my story. "You were right," I said, "and the rest were wrong. It is clear as day to me now. I see all through what were doubtless Lockhart's strongest feelings, his desire for revenge on his assassins, and his remorse at having so cruelly deceived me, working themselves out to their destined ends of retaliation in the one case, and atonement in the other."

And Honeywood replied with a gentle melancholy, "I see your lack of faith all through marring everything done on your behalf, and nearly ruining you in the end. But it will be a lesson to you for the future."

But if you, my reader, look upon Honeywood as a not impartial observer, I would refer you to my wife (*née* Florence Eversley), who possesses by far the clearest and most judicial understanding I ever met with, and who firmly believes every word of my story.

Since that awful night in Italy (now many years ago) I have had no recurrence of any abnormal symptoms; the manifestations ceased when the need for them was gone.

And so, with full confidence in your verdict, I leave you to judge between my unbelieving friends and myself.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

PART II:—continued.

CHAPTER III.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

IT did not take long for the inhabitants of the island to prepare for their departure. Where no one had a second suit of clothes, and every one had lived and slept for five months in the dress he stood in, there was no packing of trunks nor any changing of costumes. The accumulated possessions of them all did not include anything worth carrying away, the very kettle—the one cooking utensil they had been provided with—had suffered from overwork, and was no longer in a condition to do much service to any one. The clothes of the men were ragged and worn; some of them had lost their hats, and nearly all were barefoot.

Agnes alone, the most helpless and therefore the most protected of those on the island, still appeared in tolerable garments, worn and faded though they were.

The men had rushed down to the beach with wild cries of joy. They were soon shouting directions to the sailors in the boat which was drawing near. The calmness of the sea made it easier to approach the shore than it had been on the first arrival of the shipwrecked, and the sailors plunged through the water to scramble into the boat before it touched the land. In the excitement they had forgotten everything except their own unexpected rescue; but when in a tumult of delight, they had shaken hands with their deliverers, they remembered, not without a tinge of shame, that there was some one else to think of.

"The lady! There's the lady!" they said.

"If she's alive yet," added one; "for she seemed bad enough last night. Perhaps Mr. Dilworth's gone for her."

The strange sailors rested on their oars and looked up at the island. Even in calm weather it was not possible to row right in to the strip of beach without danger of injury to the boat from the pointed rocks over which the breakers foamed.

"Bring the boat round here," they heard the voice of Henry Dilworth calling to them.

Then they saw that he had carried Agnes down

to the projecting piece of rock where she and the child had landed on their first arrival. It was in a sheltered nook of the cliff, where the water was calmer than beside the beach, but the rocks rose straight from the level of the sea.

One of the sailors went on shore and clambered round to Henry Dilworth's assistance. Together the two men slung Agnes gently down in her own hammock to the boat waiting underneath. Then they slipped down the rope after her, and were ready to go.

The new comers had been sufficiently impressed by the gaunt faces and ragged garments of the shipwrecked sailors: they had welcomed them with somewhat boisterous sympathy. The pale, worn face of Agnes touched them differently and subdued them almost to silence; only low murmurs and shakings of the head signified the melancholy view they took of her case.

"Poor thing! she's far gone;" or, "I reckon we're too late," and so on; while Henry Dilworth arranged Agnes as comfortably as he could, and the others looked on as if afraid to touch so broken a thing. She glanced round her meanwhile with bright anxious eyes, and tried to catch what the men were saying.

"It isn't too late, is it?" she appealed to Henry Dilworth. "I shall not die now; I shall go home."

"I think you won't die now. I hope you will go home."

He had fixed her in the easiest position he could contrive under the circumstances, and now he told the men to go on.

But when the boat began to move through the water, the eagerness of Agnes to watch the ship looming nearer and larger overcame her sense of fatigue; she was not content to remain lying as he had placed her; she begged to be raised and supported so that she could see properly. Henry Dilworth was obliged to put his arm under her head and lift it. She rested then against his shoulder with all the unconsciousness given by absorbing excitement; and she turned her bright eyes to him from time to time with a look that demanded sympathy and encouragement in her new hope of life.

In the stillness of the strange light shining over the tranquil sea, with the cries of the sea birds in their ears, they drew nearer to the ship. She seemed to Agnes a beautiful thing, a heaven-sent messenger, a home, or at least a certain way to one. The horror of those barren rocks which rose out of the grey waters was left behind for ever. Agnes was safe, she would get well, she would see her friends again. These were the only thoughts in her mind at the moment. It was not strange to her to rest on Henry Dilworth's shoulder, or to feel the pressure of his supporting arm; but to him—at this moment when he knew that their parting must be near—it was strange indeed, and bitter as well as sweet, to feel her leaning upon him so.

They reached the ship; and Agnes was given up to the care of the captain's wife, the only woman on board. This good creature received her with every womanly attention, lent her clothes, put her to bed in her own cabin, and tended her with her own hands. Afterwards she went up to make her report to "the gentleman" on the condition of "the lady." She was somewhat surprised

when Henry Dilworth spoke of the latter personage as "Miss Leake."

"The lady's not your wife then?"

"Certainly not. She lost her friends in the wreck, and has had no one except me and the sailors to look after her since."

This little mistake vexed him. It added to his uneasiness and the perplexity of the situation. He saw his own line of duty clearly enough; but did Agnes see it in the same way? Would she understand him? When would she awake to the knowledge that they had returned to the civilized world, and that he had no longer a right to be to her all that he had been in their desolate retreat?

For one whole day the calm weather compelled the ship to remain within sight of the island. The grey sea, the black rocks, the thick and heavy air hanging about them, made up a melancholy picture for those just escaped to gaze upon. The fog had lifted and thinned; but the sun's rays were chilled as they passed through it; far distances were hidden, nearer distances blurred and magnified. The island itself looked unreal, revealed in a gap of the mist, the waters calm about it, the rocks reflected; a clearly defined thing amid a world of concealment; it was as if the corner of a curtain had been raised to reveal a lurking horror underneath.

"It is like a nightmare to look at that dreadful place," Agnes said to Henry Dilworth, when, refreshed by food and sleep, she sat on the deck some hours later. "When I shut my eyes I shall always see it, always."

"I think not. After a time you will forget," he said gently, with a thought of other things which would pass away from her memory too.

"At least it is good to see it only; not to feel or touch it any more," Agnes went on. "It was like a prison that had got hold of us and never meant to let us go. Even now it keeps us here. I should be afraid still if I were alone; but when I look at you I feel that it is all right."

He did not answer her. The time was over when such statements seemed natural and easy to respond to. Therefore he received her hopeful speeches in a strange silence which she was too much excited to remark. She seemed to be conscious of no change in their relation to one another, and she expected him to care for her comfort now as he had cared for it on the desolate island.

With the dawn of the next day the wind rose, and the island was left far behind. Henry Dilworth had already begun to think of the future, and it surprised him a little that Agnes should have formed no plans for herself, or at least should speak of none.

The fact was, she took it absolutely for granted that she would return home at once, in the quickest and most comfortable way, and that he would see to all necessary arrangements on her behalf. She did not even imagine that he might not be going to England also, that his business would take him in an opposite direction. She had grown used to his care, and looked upon it now as a necessity, if not a right. Under no circumstances would she have expected to look after her own affairs. If he had not been present, she would have been compelled to appeal for help to some one else. If she had been put on the vessel alone she would hardly have attempted to plan her homeward journey herself, but rather, having sig-

nified her address, she would have expected to be handed on from captain to captain, like a bale of goods well labelled, until she reached her right destination. Ways and means of travel were wholly beyond her knowledge; her people at home would repay all trouble taken on her behalf, and meanwhile it was natural that some one should be kind to her and tell her what to do.

Now that the terrible privations of the island oppressed her no longer, now that safety took the place of danger, and hope replaced despair, she found in her intercourse with Henry Dilworth something that was more than consolation, that was actually enjoyment. Never before had any one on whom she had grown accustomed to rely mingled deference with tender care. Her lovers in the past had not touched her heart; there had been no need for her to rest on their kindness, no occasion to rely on their knowledge. Her brothers and sisters, on the other hand, had found in her no qualities to wonder at or to admire with reverence.

Henry Dilworth laid the flattering homage of a suitor at her feet while wrapping her about with the tender care of a guardian and protector. How could she fail, then, to find a charm in this intercourse which led her to the delights of a new experience through the safe and well-trodden paths of old feelings and habits?

While he thought of the parting to come, walking carefully with his eyes fixed on the end near at hand, that nothing might be done which would look strange in the light of that separation which he believed to be inevitable, she never thought of any end to their intercourse, any future which would contradict this present.

She had never yet begun a friendship which had not gone on as steadily as life itself went on in Elmdale. Her affections had been almost exclusively confined to her family circle; these had, as a matter of course, no ebbing or flowing, but coursed evenly onward through the months and years. She had never known what it was to be intimate with persons whom she was destined to forget; and Henry Dilworth had long since ceased to appear a mere episode in her life. Outside her home circle he had become its mainspring; she did not even think of the home circle without feeling as if she were speaking of it to him. That reflection of her own life which she found in the sympathy of another, and which was essential to her happiness, she had received from him more completely than from any one else. It did not occur to her that the life must soon arrange itself without it, or that the moment was approaching when Henry Dilworth must pass out of her existence completely and for ever.

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE EXPERIMENT.

IN an unhome-like foreign-looking room in a South American port Agnes sat alone. She had not yet been on shore twelve hours, but already she was horrified at the place and frightened at her solitude there. After recommending her to the attention of the landlady—a woman who couldn't speak English—Henry Dilworth had gone out to transact business,

and had only looked in for a few minutes at noon to ask how she was.

She had been much better on board the ship than on the island; food and comparative comfort, with hope and freedom from anxiety, had given her injured health a chance of recovery. But already the bright look of anticipation had faded out of her face; repugnance, perplexity, and dread were expressed there instead. She was pale, the corners of her mouth drooped; she looked tired and dispirited. A meal had been put before her, but she did not taste it; she sat quite still, leaning back in her chair and looking continually at the door.

She was discouraged, melancholy, frightened. The sailors had of course dispersed, and she did not expect, or desire, to see them any more; but why did Mr. Dilworth leave her alone among strange people—foreigners, whom she couldn't understand and didn't like? There was no room for real terror here, but nervous dislike of strange customs and dread of uncomfortable situations took its place.

She looked at the food and could not eat it; she hated to take a meal alone. Why did he not come back and speak to her? She might have been very ill, she might have wanted a hundred things in his absence. He had been for so many months almost always within her call, and now he was already lost to her in a foreign town, the streets of which were at this moment more terrifying to her, more unexplorable, than had been the desolate cliffs of her island prison. While she stayed indoors she had none to appeal to; and if she went out she would certainly never find her way back. She was like a neglected child ready to cry, because its nurse has gone away and forgotten it.

At last Henry Dilworth returned, but hardly in the anxious and sympathetic mood she had expected. He had an absorbed and somewhat disturbed expression on his face; he was like a man who has business on hand which he does not care to do, and which he is resolved to get over as soon as possible. But she was too glad to see him to study his looks. She uttered a little cry of pleasure and reproach.

"What a long time you have been away!"

"Yes, there was a good deal to do."

He glanced at the table, and a little frown of disappointment wrinkled itself on his forehead.

"Haven't you dined? I hoped I had given you time enough. I told them to bring it in to you, and then I thought you would be ready to talk to me."

"I am ready, quite ready. How could I eat all by myself? It was so lonely, and I was frightened."

"Frightened?"

"I didn't know where you had gone, and I couldn't make these people understand me. Suppose I had been ill!" she added with some petulance.

He looked at her anxiously.

"You don't feel so, I hope? You haven't wanted anything?"

"I don't know, I felt very miserable and lonely in this strange place; and I didn't know when you would come back."

"I was sure to come back. But you must have something to eat now. This is the way to be ill—to have no dinner."

"How *can* I eat alone?" she repeated; "but you'll have something with me, won't you? Tell them to bring in more things."

"I would rather not, thank you. I will serve you, if you'll let me. I've had what I require."

"Oh, while I was waiting!"

Her voice trembled, and a tear fell on her dress.

"Miss Leake," he said, with a grave impatience unlike his habitual compassionate indulgence; "you don't mean that you waited for me to come and dine with you?"

"Why not?" she asked, looking at him with no attempt to conceal the shining drops in her eyes.

He hesitated, looked at her, and then said gravely and quietly, "Never mind. It does not matter. If you will eat something first, we will talk about other things afterwards."

"I can't eat; I'm not hungry," she answered shortly.

From his eyes it seemed as if distress was now added to his perplexity. He sat down, looked at her silently, and sighed.

"You look tired," he said abruptly.

"It doesn't matter," she answered, the corners of her mouth trembling, "I'm *sure* to be tired."

He moved his hand over his forehead in a troubled manner; then he seemed to shake off with an effort the impression her words had made on him, and he asked gravely and gently, "Are you fit to talk about arrangements to-night, or shall we wait until to-morrow?"

"Arrangements? I don't understand."

"What you will do, how you will get home, I mean."

"Oh!" There was some surprise in the little exclamation, some perplexity also.

"Of course, you will go back to England, to your friends, as soon as you can."

She looked at him with a kind of wonder. She had not expected him to state so self-evident a fact.

"There is one thing I want to ask you," he went on rather hurriedly, "before I forget. Have you any money?"

Her face had grown pale. No more tears gathered in her eyes, which opened wider and looked at him with a species of dread, as if she felt afraid of what he might be going on to say. Mechanically she took her purse from her pocket and emptied its contents on the table before him. She was sitting at one corner of it, and he on the opposite side. Two sovereigns and some silver rolled out.

"You will want some more," he said, "will you take this and put it in your purse? Your friends will pay me back when you get to them."

She took the coins indifferently; no reluctance about accepting them troubled her; of course people would provide her with what she needed until she got home, and then Susie would pay them; but she asked, "Why should I take it now? Won't it do when I want it? I never pay for things myself; people would cheat me."

"It is for the other end. I can arrange for your passage, and your bill here. But you must not land in England without money."

"They will meet me."

"If they shouldn't?"

"You can give it to me then, when I want it."

He looked at her steadily; her eyes met his with an appealing, entreating confidence difficult

to answer at the moment, yet he felt compelled to speak.

"I am going to Australia," he said.

"To—Australia?"

Her face became even paler than it was before; the thin hands resting on her knees closed in a nervous clasp; he could not take his eyes from hers, and that made the effort to go on much harder; but having begun, he seemed to have no further choice.

"I was going to Australia before. My business is there. I have none in England."

"No," she assented in a low voice, still watching his lips as he spoke.

"You are safe here now, there is nothing more I can do for you; you will go home by the next ship. One is expected to touch in a few days. The consul will see you on board. I have spoken to him about you."

"The consul?"

If he had said the North Pole it would have been as intelligible to her.

"The people here will make you as comfortable as they can till the ship arrives. You will have no difficulty at all."

"I am to stay here—alone?"

"For a few days only."

"And I am to go to England—alone?"

"Did you expect anything else?"

She did not answer; she put her clasped hands on the table and laid her head down on them; then she was quite still.

Henry Dilworth got up and moved away restlessly.

"Is there anything you would like me to do?" he asked. He felt that he had been clumsy, brutal; and yet for her own sake it seemed necessary that the tie between them should be speedily cut, before it was knotted fast enough to bring to her unhappiness and to him reproach. Here was a situation in which his general capability did not help him; he was always ready to do things, but to leave them undone gracefully was another matter. It had been very simple to take care of this poor girl and be kind to her, when that was his evident duty; to leave her now, when the duty was done and the need for him over, was altogether different. Yet his own reluctance was a warning to him. He was altogether too much interested in her to continue a protection which could be more safely given—and as efficiently—by an indifferent person.

She did not answer at first. When she lifted her face it was white and despondent. She looked as if the knowledge that she must face the world alone had taken her poor little chance of life away.

"I shall never get to England without you," she said in a low voice, as if she spoke to herself.

He glanced at her with quick compunction. It seemed indeed as if she spoke the truth. Her worn face and wasted hands told how small an amount of vitality her sufferings had left to her. Abandoned to the care of strangers, deprived of that confidential sympathy which seemed essential to her, would not her spark of life go out before it could be rekindled at the warm fire of home?

"Did you expect me to go with you?" he asked.

"I never thought of anything else."

"Would you like me to go?"

A faint colour came back to her face, and an eager question into her eyes, but she did not speak.

"After all, what could I do for you? On the island there was no one else, no one more fit; but now any woman will nurse you and look after you as I cannot do."

She leaned back in her chair and sighed a little.

"It is not nursing I want."

"It is nursing that you want," he repeated impatiently. He was looking at her keenly, but he spoke as much to himself as to her; "without it I don't know how you'll pull through."

"I don't care if I don't pull through," said Agnes, turning her face away with a flush of passion.

"As for anything else," he went on, without replying to her observation, "how can I take care of you? What can I do for you? I have no right to take care of you now."

"No right? I don't understand. There is no one else—if you *care* to do."

"Miss Leake!" He came nearer and stood before her, the corner of the table between them. "There is one way in which I could be all you need—only one; but it is impossible."

She shook her head wearily as a sign that she did not understand. He stood looking at her, his face flushed, his eyes observant. He was no longer the man who had made up his mind to do a disagreeable thing, and who was doing it clumsily and reluctantly. He was more like one who sees a new opening before him, difficult but possible, and who studies its obstacles with growing determination.

That thought which had come to him in the last night on the island, and which he had since dismissed as a treason to her confidence in him, returned to him now.

It had first flashed on his mind as holding a forlorn hope for her in her desperate situation; but it had not then been practicable, even if he had decided that it was advisable. Here it was indeed possible, but it was no longer so necessary, unless indeed her weakness and her persistent reliance on him made it so. Would it be kind or unkind to offer her the chance of it? to give her the opportunity of taking all he had to give, or leaving all untaken?

If she started for England alone, and died by the way, of what use to her would have been his reticence and self-repression? Was not the assurance of life—an assurance which she herself only saw in his continued care and kindness—of more avail to her at this moment than freedom in the future? Was it not indeed as necessary for him now to take her life and cherish it as it had been before to save and guard it?

"If she cares for me enough, if it seems a natural thing to her, it might be worth while for her own sake after all."

So he said to himself as he looked at her. It did not occur to him to balance the good or the evil on his own behalf; the sole consideration for him at the moment seemed to be her safety, her interest, how best he could take care of her, cherish her into happy hope, nurse her into health, restore her certainly to her friends; and he could think of one way—only one.

Then he thought of how it could be done, all in the minute in which he stood there looking at her—

and he resolved that he would have shaped his intention fully before he disturbed her mind with a further hint.

"There is one way," he repeated aloud, "but I must see if it can easily be managed here—and how; then I will speak to you about it. I must leave you again now, but I will see you in an hour or so. Try to rest meanwhile—will you?"

She threw a glance of repugnance round the room.

"It's not very comfortable," he said, "but it was so much worse on the island; and there you were obedient, and did what I said was for your good."

"On the island you were kind to me," she replied.

"And not here?" He put his large hands lightly on her two shoulders and looked down into her face; such a young, sweet, and withal desponding face it was that looked at him! He lifted his hands and turned away with an incomprehensible movement of impatience.

"Lie down now, and do try to rest. I shall be in again soon." And so he left her.

(To be continued.)

YOU TOLD ME.

YOU told me that you loved me not,
Or rather that you loved me less;
And, overwhelmed, I half forgot
Your old-time loving tenderness.
It seemed as tho' the sun had fled,
And left no moon, whose borrowed light
Might still a cheering radiance shed,
To scare the spectres of the night.

I could not grasp your meaning then;
I thought your heart was turned to stone;
My troth you gave me back again,
And left me fetterless—and lone.
You said 'twere best to break all ties,
That I at least should e'er be free;
But think not love so quickly dies—
You still are all in all to me.

'Twas not yourself that said me nay;
Another's will controlled your mind.
We said "Good-bye": you turned away,
But cast a tender glance behind;
And in that look was no disguise,
I knew, my dearest, you were true;
Your heart had spoken thro' the eyes,
And all my soul went out to you.

But let all bonds be swept away,
My love shall never need a chain;
I take some backward steps to-day,
Anon a greater bliss to gain.
I hold you dear all else above;
Then let us live, that both may know
A sweeter, truer, deeper love,
That naught shall ever overthrow.

FRANCIS ERNEST BRADLEY.

HIGHLAND CROFTERS.

SINCE they were forcibly put down in 1745 till within the past few years, the inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland have been as quiet and law-abiding as any in Her Majesty's dominions, notwithstanding the many wrongs which they have had to bear—wronges which the sons of the oppressors now readily admit. The causes which have conspired to produce their present restlessness, of which so much has lately been said and written, are those which go to form what is called a transition state in the social system.

Before the Jacobite rebellions the clan system prevailed in the North, and under that patriarchal mode of government, the inhabitants seem to have been fairly contented. After the rebellion, however, the chieftains of clans were changed by law into landlords of the English type, who, when communication with the South became easier, found it much more pleasant to spend in London the income derived from their Highland estates, in which they spent only a few summer months, thus seeing them only at their best. When these landlords were short of money they did one of two things—they either sold the estate to a capitalist, who as a land merchant tried to make a good percentage by raising the rents of the tenants, or they ordered their factor to do this for themselves. This increased rent was paid by increased industry at burning sea-weed for kelp, once so necessary for the production of soap, by incurring more risk at the fishing if he were near the sea, or by harder work on the croft. Chemistry has, however, revealed a cheaper material than kelp for the manufacture of soap, and neither fishing nor farming has during the past few years proved remunerative, and thus many of the people have been brought face to face with famine. But perhaps the cause which more than any other has contributed to the present restlessness, is the congestion of the increasing population in the townships on the coast. Up to the beginning of the century, the population was widely spread up and down the straths, but the landlords, about the beginning of this century "pressed by necessity, or guided by the prevailing economical theories and projects prevalent at the time," and ignoring any right these Highlanders might have to the soil which their forefathers held and cultivated, ordered them summarily to quit their homesteads, which at once were transformed into sheep-farms, and to betake themselves to the barren sea coast. Rather than thus settle down in semi-starvation many left for America—veritable exiles—and as soon as they had earned enough to pay for their passage, their friends followed, and this emigration, as well as the great number of Highlanders who entered the army, kept down the population. These drains on the population have lately in a great measure ceased, while labour has become scarcer, education more general, and intercommunication with the Lowlands has led them to see their true condition; and with it they now-a-days feel so disgusted that their manifested restlessness resulted in a Royal Commission being appointed to inquire into their condition. Of their condition the Commissioners in their report say: "The population belonging to the class of crofters and cottars engaged in

agricultural and pastoral pursuits, in addition to the evils attached to an unproductive soil, high elevations, and a variable and boisterous climate, suffer from several causes of indigence, discouragement, and irritation, which are subject to remedial treatment. These may be enumerated as follows: Undue contraction of the area of holdings; insecurity of tenure; want of compensation for improvements; high rents; defective communication; withdrawal of the soil in connection with the purposes of sport. To these we may add as contributing in our opinion to the depressed condition of the people, defects in education, defects in the machinery of justice, and want of facilities for emigration." While of the people themselves they say: "The crofting and cottar population of the Highlands and Islands, small though it be, is a nursery of good workers and good citizens for the whole empire. In this respect the stock is exceptionally valuable. By sound physical constitution, native intelligence, and good moral training, it is particularly fitted to recruit the people of our industrial centres. . . . It cannot be indifferent to the whole nation, constituted as it now is, to possess within its borders a people hardy, skilful, intelligent and prolific, as an ever-flowing fountain of renovating life. It would be difficult to replace them by another race of equal worth and ability." To these characteristics may be added good soldierly qualities, which have stood Britain in good stead on many a hard-won field. Of the Sutherland Highlanders—a regiment raised in one of the now desolate straths—the officer under whom they served for several years said that they had confirmed the well-known maxim that the most regular and best conducted troops in quarters were those who formed the surest dependence and acquired most renown on the field. The officer who reviewed them on another occasion on their return from America, said that the regiment was a picture of military discipline and moral rectitude.

What strikes a visitor to the Highlands as very strange is that such a people should live in such deplorable hovels as very many of them still do. To quote the Royal Commissioners once more, "His habitation is usually of a character which would almost imply physical and moral degradation in the eyes of those who do not know how much decency, courtesy, virtue, and even mental refinement, survive amidst the sordid surroundings of a Highland hovel." What is known as the old black houses, are the original kind of Highland habitations. They were built of turf by the people themselves, without chimney, with only small windows, and indeed wanting everything which we nowadays consider essential to any degree of comfort. They are, however, happily becoming rare, especially on the east coast, and their place is being taken by the new "white houses," which are larger, cleaner, and much more comfortable. These, also, have in great part been built by the tenants themselves, the proprietor giving some such help as the necessary lime and wood, or perhaps the labour and slate. To repay the proprietor for this, the rent is raised to full valuation when the son succeeds to the house and its adjoining croft. This method of rent-raising, has become so common on some estates, that it is known as the "death premium," and its effect is, as might be expected,

to make the crofters careless about improving their holdings. It is said that one of them, when asked why he was not better clad when he had so many sheep, replied, "the factor might see me with my fine clothes on, and then my rent would be raised." This state of affairs, which is the effect of years of bad local government, is now exceedingly difficult to remedy, even by legislation, for unhappily people are not made contented by Acts of Parliament. Such of the Highlanders as are taking part in the present agitation, declare that the people will not now be content, until it is law that they get compensation for any permanent improvements which they may effect on their holdings—that they have some guarantee that they be not arbitrarily evicted—that they have to pay only a rent fixed by a competent valuator. These things the Royal Commissioners have recommended to the government, and also that crofts should be extended whenever possible, that fisheries and native industry should be encouraged by the building of piers, harbours, and public works, that the more remote parts should be opened up by roads and railways, and that emigration should be encouraged by means of state loans, as "emigration, properly conducted, is an indispensable remedy for the condition of some parts of the Highlands and Islands." Abroad, where the "magic of property" can be more easily brought to bear on Highlanders, who at home are accounted lazy, they become wonderfully active, and seem in nine cases out of ten to be successful. Is it likely that this powerful agent in forming habits of industry and self-respect will ever be brought within the crofter's reach, while he remains in his native country?

A. POLSON.

AN ODD ADVENTURE.

IT was the year you fellows behaved so idiotically about the gold medal at the Academy—made me believe I was going to get it; let me in for ordering any amount of oysters (only sixpence a dozen then, though) for a jubilee supper; and O'Kelly, with his vile drawing, and viler colour, won the prize after all! Lord, how well I recollect the disappointment of that night; none other that I have experienced since has come near it in keenness.

I can see the table now in my mind's eye, ready for the feast; the gas blazing above it regardless of expense; the brown bread and butter, and the cayenne pepper, and the lemons on the sideboard; and all of you talking about nothing at all—very loud and very fast. O'Kelly to win that medal! Well, he has never done much since, beyond turning out a very green landscape once a year, not a bit like Nature. He imagines his work is full of "poetic feeling"—let him—that commodity don't pay, as his highest price has never been more than £200—and plenty, too. While I! Once, I made enough in ten days to take the wife and girls to Italy for two months—did it well, too: courier and maid; and once—A man like O'Kelly to win my medal! the smart rankles still.

It was just after that disgraceful injustice, and I was very sore about it, that Morgan, with whom I was boarding at the time, informed me he was

going to give a dinner party the following day, and of course I'd like to dine out at the neighbouring cook-shop, wouldn't I? "Excellent soup," he said, "and beautiful slices of *à la mode* beef—cheap too."

At first I made up my mind it *would* be better fun to go out, but when I saw how anxious he was to make me I determined to stay—particularly as the old idiot let drop that Turner, Constable, and Etty were expected among the guests. So I went on, shading Hercules' hand, and every now and then glancing up from my drawing at Morgan's puzzled red face, his expression saying as plainly as tongue could speak—

"Drat the boy; he'll eat at least fifteen shillingsworth, and there's no telling the wine he'll swill down—whatever will Maria say?"

At last, when he had exhausted every argument, and as a *dernier ressort* was offering to treat me half-price to the pit at any theatre I liked to name, I said very firmly—

"No use, sir, I want to dine with you to-morrow." And out he had to go, grumbling and growling in an undertone, but not daring to say even a word, for my mother paid outrageously high for me on condition that I mingled with the artistic society, of which old M—— swore he was the centre.

You remember his drawing-room with the plaster casts about, and the wide staring windows, and the round table with the books on it, and the pictures by Morgan, who could teach but couldn't paint a scrap? That's the background; and in the foreground imagine those giants Etty, Constable, and Turner standing by the fireplace, talking hard together and noticing no one else. M—— fussing about, hoping they weren't cold, and begging them to allow him to poke the fire, while Mrs. M—— uneasily settled the sham flowers in the vases, and Jane and I whispered in a corner. You always said Jane never was an atom pretty; but then you were pig-headed and obstinate, all of you.

"I'm not to dine," she said, "Pa says he can't afford it. Why did you insist on staying in, Williams? (she called me by my surname as if I were a schoolboy still.) Pa didn't want you to stop."

Before I could answer a diversion was created by the entrance of an uncle and aunt of Morgan's, whom they hated and feared, but from whom they had expectations, and to whom they always gave places at their parties.

"We walked," were Mrs. Dack's first words, in a loud deep tone, as she kissed her niece on the brow; "we walked 'ere, and as we come along we was nearly drove over by a 'bus."

Jane and I laughed; we couldn't help it—but other people arriving put a stop to the rest of the Dack adventures, and I never heard the old lady open her mouth again during the evening.

I found myself at dinner between Constable and a young man, very talkative and clever, who had taken up painting for a pastime, and knew, Heavens, what a lot he knew! He jabbered at the R.A.'s as if he were their equal, while I shuddered at his impudence. I was in a draught, and I believe the waiter had strict orders not to give me wine, for I never had a drop, and Constable spoke to me only once during the grand, the gorgeous repast.

"Quite *à la Grecque*," said he, pointing at a sugar-candy temple affair that was in front of him on the table.

I didn't know what to answer; so I smiled like a booby, and, as the books say, the conversation dropped. But Freeman, that smart young man, after he had finished bullying the painters about the superior merits of the Academy thirty years before he was born, condescended to talk to me, and drew from me the confession of my woes, with which he was good enough to sympathize. "Conduct unworthy that institution," he declared, but bade me be of good heart, as perhaps next year I might be more fortunate. I waxed enthusiastic, I remember, about Art, and told him of all the delight I had in painting from early morn till dewy eve, and how I hoped I should never think of money, but only of fame, and nonsense of that sort, which makes me roar now-a-days at the bare idea of.

"Young Raphael," said Freeman, with his hand on my shoulder as I stood at the door letting him out that December night, and the rain was blown in our faces as he spoke, "stick to those sentiments, and you will do some good in the world. I say, look here, I am living in Kent now, with my brother, in a small house not far from Ashford. We've no spare room, but he'll be away next Saturday; so come down by the coach, and I'll meet you and drive you over to Holmecroft, and then I'll show you some pictures, my boy, that are like flesh and blood, and would make Etty mad with envy; and landscapes—real trees and meadows—not green wool, like Constable's; and sea-pieces that Turner would be proud of—all by me, my lad! Come—mind, you come—and stay as long as you like."

I gratefully accepted his offer, and as I ran upstairs I too entertained a contempt for the great men whom before that night I had looked up to as if they were gods, and used to wonder if they ate their meals, and dressed, and lived, like common folk. Since then I've learnt not to accept promiscuous invitations, and not to attend to the braying of every jackass, some of whom absolutely speak of my productions now-a-days in the irreverent tone Freeman used when discussing the Academicians and their work.

Saturday saw me dressed in my best, with a beautiful hand-bag by my side, on the top of the Ashford coach, and though I remember every moment almost of the day, I won't rhapsodize now, as I am afraid you'll want my blood if I talk too much. At my journey's end, I looked all about for my friend, of whom I could not find a trace. It was six in the afternoon, and very dark, and unutterably gloomy, and I was a bit nervous, and consequently did not feel at all at my ease as I stood in the sloppy road, wondering what I should do best.

"He's a harum-scarum fool," Morgan had said of him only the day before. "He's never written to you, and I don't believe he'll expect you." Which proposition I had laughed to scorn.

"He's asked me ever so often," I replied, coldly; "and he wants to show me his pictures."

"He don't want *your* advice, you may take your oath of that," Morgan had answered. "Nor I don't believe he'd ask the President himself to teach him to draw. He's that conceited he is sure he knows better than all of us put together; but

he's well off, and can afford to have opinions of his own."

I asked at the inn whereabouts Holmecroft was, and if Mr. Freeman had been in the town that day. They could give me no information beyond saying that the house was eight miles from Ashford; that it was a small lonely place, and that I should have to walk it, they were afraid. I waited ten minutes before I could make up my mind, and gulped down some beer to give me courage, and then, grasping my bag, went out into the dark with all a true Londoner's hatred of dull country roads, to the house of my erratic friend. Once or twice I thought I was an ass not to stay in the town, and go on to Freeman's in the morning, and then I recollected I had not much money, and could not afford to spend even five or six shillings unnecessarily. On I went; the trees were black against the grey sky, and the country round looked like a gigantic etching. My heart thumped against my waistcoat whenever there was a stir in the hedges, or a cow lowed in the distant fields; and once I yelled with fright at the end of the fourth or fifth mile, because something ran at me from behind a milestone (I've since reason to believe it was a rabbit, which would have been almost as much frightened as I was), and made, as I thought, for my calves. After walking hours, turning up wrong roads, climbing over wrong gates, and being put right once by a gipsy with a child in her arms, and another time by a tinker, I came at last to a pretty little plantation, in the centre of which was a charming looking cottage, with its diamond-paned windows gleaming with the cheerful firelight, and the gate to the small avenue swinging hospitably open.

My feet went crunch, crunch, on the wet gravel as I plodded wearily up to the front door, which was opened before I could ring in a ghostly manner by a man whom at first I did not recognise as Freeman.

"Is it all right?" he began. "Have you ordered—?"

"It is I—Williams," I stammered, shyer and stupider than ever. And then Freeman, after an astonished stare, and with what sounded like an oath, pulled me into the pretty hall, where I stood with my heart in my mouth, feeling anything rather than the invited guest come to spend two days' holiday in the country. His face seemed altered; he looked dreadfully ill and old, and as if he had been up all night. I saw all this, but, stupid lad that I was, I daren't say, "I am in your way—I'll go back," but gazed at him as if I were daft. In a second or too he seemed to recover.

"Where did I meet you? Oh, at Morgan's? Yes, yes, I remember. I never wrote to you," he went on; "I never thought—Did you walk here? You've had nothing to eat? I'm very sorry. Come here, and I'll order you something."

And this was my welcome! "Where did I meet you?" I never thought"—instead of hailing me again as Raphael, and being full of conversation, he had forgotten my name even, and was tongue-tied. I looked mechanically round the room he led me into; spotted the pictures at once as we always do, and knew they were very bad specimens both as to colour and drawing, and thought vaguely, "Were these

fearful productions *Freeman's*." I warmed my hands at the fire while he rang the bell, and then began restlessly walking up and down the room. A maid came in, her eyes swollen with crying, who looked aghast at the sight of me. "Martha," said my host, "this gentleman—Mr. er—er—Williams—has had no dinner; he will sleep here to-night." At which the servant looked more surprised still, but saying "Yes, sir," left the room.

After a little time he began to talk, and sighed heavily every now and then. "Am I in your way?" I stuttered. "I am so sorry." He looked at me for a second, and seeing how horribly nervous I was. "No, no," he replied, kindly enough; "not a bit. I am worried, but it's nothing to do with you. See, here's Martha with the cold beef, fall to," he went on, with a dreary attempt at his old sparkle, which died out instantly on hearing the wheels of a carriage on the gravel. He left the room abruptly, and I heard him open the front door as he had done to me.

"Well?" he said impatiently. "They'll be here in an hour or two, Sir," was the answer. "Are coming by carrier's cart." "Hush, hush," I heard, and then scraps of low-toned conversation, such as "Only a boy; might be frightened; no need for him to know; will drive him back to-morrow." In a few minutes Freeman returned to find me still at the beef—hard as a board it was, too—and my pulse going at about 180; he sat down by me, and talked, but was so evidently not attending to what I answered, that I pretended to be terribly tired, and asked if I might be allowed to go to bed, to which he assented with alacrity. He took me up the little staircase, lighted dimly by a vile smelling lamp, to the landing over head, from which led, right and left, the two bedrooms, the one on the left being my apartment. It was a pretty place, and though I have never seen it since I can recall every feature of it; the chintz curtains, white, with pale yellow tulips, were snugly drawn, and a deep arm chair was in front of the crackling wood fire.

As soon as I was left alone I lit every candle within reach, and gave myself up to speculating as to what on earth all this mystery meant. *Who* was coming in a couple of hours. *What* was I not to know? *Why* did everyone look utterly wretched and oh, *how* I wished I was safe in Newman Street in the hideous little garret which was my share of the Morgans' refined home. If I escaped free, I vowed I would never steal to the play again, and on coming back pretend I had been visiting my aunt—the worst offence I could charge myself with in those far away days. I took ever so long winding my watch, and quite half an hour getting out of my clothes, but the evil moment could no longer be delayed, and at last the candles must be blown out; the fire I stirred into a huge blaze, enough to set the chimney alight, and then took a flying leap into my bed, for fear of being caught by my legs by some one secreted under it.

Ah youth, youth, inestimable priceless treasure! In less time than it takes me to tell you this I was fast asleep.

I was dreaming of Jane, when suddenly I awoke with a start. Whenever I do that I am always certain that I have been startled from my slumbers for some good reason; so I

stared about me in the dim light, but could hear or see nothing. As I was most particularly sleepy I shut my eyes, and settled myself comfortably again, when this time I heard distinctly the door handle being turned very, very softly. I was wide awake in an instant, my heart began to beat so loud I was afraid it would be heard, and I felt paralyzed with fright. Outside on the landing a chiming clock began ringing out eleven o'clock, and the ghastly gay tones of the French tune that followed the sounding of the hour seemed to mock my terror. "Compagnon de la Margolaine," sang the little clock. Soon the tune was done, and silence reigned again.

Then I heard, in the quiet that followed, the noise of the door rubbing against the carpet ever so gently. You can laugh now, but, by gad, you would all have been just as frightened as I was! Not a mouse stirred for about ten seconds; my heart went thump, thump against the sheets; and I saw coming into the room, and shutting the door gently behind her, a bent, withered hag, dressed in black, carrying a light in her hand, who walked straight to my bed. I instantly shut my eyes, and tried to look as if I were contentedly asleep. I don't think I breathed even as I felt the dazzle of the light on my face; but in that supreme moment of terror I wondered what would happen if I opened my eyes and looked at her. After what seemed an age, the light left me, and I was conscious that the candle was put down on a table at the foot of my bed, and that the woman was opening the drawers of the wardrobe.

"She won't find anything of mine," I thought, exultantly; "so if she has come to steal, she'll be sold." I heard the faint rustle of paper, and under cover of it I turned down the counterpane, meaning to make a bolt for it. The rustle stopped, and then went on; for one moment there seemed a doubt in the mind of the old girl as to whether she shouldn't come and look me up again. I felt after all I hadn't the courage to leave my bed, so I lay perfectly still, wondering what her next move would be.

It came soon enough. Mumbling and muttering to herself, she walked cautiously towards me; I looked at her from under my half-closed eyes, and was relieved to find she was older even than I had thought, so that if it came to a tussle, she would certainly get the worst of it. She gazed at me for what seemed half an hour; she pinned one of my arms against my side with her skinny fingers; she touched my forehead; and I heard her mutter, "Still warm; ah! he'll make a lovely corpse;" and with these words she left the room. That was a fatal move on her part, I thought, if she wanted to make me into the lovely corpse she spoke of, for to fly across to the door was the work of a moment, as the novelists say, and I had locked it, and put two chairs against it, and had opened the window preparatory to jumping out of it if an entrance was forced, before the last flutter of her black skirts had barely vanished. There was a slight subdued noise outside—an angry remonstrance from some man's voice at the manner in which she had managed the business, I imagined; the whispers died away; the opposite door opened and shut, and dead silence reigned again. I sat by the window till I got rheumatism, but I never returned to bed that night, as my visitor had taken all desire to sleep from me, and I felt,

when the first streaks of dawn began to appear that my hair must be white. I dressed, and ran downstairs, hoping to escape out of the house without being seen, but, as luck would have it, Freeman was at the door. He turned quickly round, and looked at me; something odd in my appearance must have struck him, for at first he seemed frightened. "Come out into the garden," he said, gently; "I've something to say to you."

And then, with his arm in mine, with the faint wintry sunshine lighting up the red-roofed house, and the wind cutting into one's face as keen as a knife, he explained the mystery of last night.

His brother had been taken ill a few days before with virulent small-pox; at first there seemed hope, but "yesterday afternoon," said Freeman, "he rapidly got worse, and he died, poor dear fellow, at a quarter to six. I sent into Ashford as quickly as possible for the necessary people, and when you came I thought you were the undertakers. I would not tell you of all this last night, as I saw how nervous you were, and I hoped that you could have left to-day without being any the wiser. Unfortunately I hear the woman sent for to attend to my brother—to lay him out, in fact—mistook the room and came into yours instead. I hope you were asleep and didn't hear her?"

I never let out all I had suffered the night before, but I choked down his breakfast, and thanked him for his kindness, and left the house as early as I could get away, walking into Ashford where I slept the night, and I swear it was months before I forgot that visit.

When I told Jane, all she said was, "I am not a bit afraid for *myself*" (people never are: it is always for those belonging to them that their fears are aroused), "but you know you *may* have caught the small-pox, and then you'll give it to pa and ma. Take my advice and go down to Margate and stay there till all fear of infection is over."

And I did, and I went by sea, and I stayed a fortnight, and then came back to Jane and the Arts with a clean bill of health.

Now, you cigarette-smoking young A.R.A., give me a light for my pipe, and, Stuart, sing us a song, my boy.

WALTER POWELL.

UNSATISFIED.

THE tones of an organ steal
Over the silent room.
Rich notes all smooth and round
Fall solemnly, charged with gloom;
And the tender waves of sound
Dance and die, half real;
The broken harmonies come
Clear and sweet and long,
Swelling loud and strong
As a rough winter's wind,—
And quiver, and are dumb—
To leave a void behind.

So in this life of mine
Billows of sorrow roll
Relentless, cold, and gray,
Till there leaps in my soul
A fancy bright and gay—
Leaps and learns to shine;
The nobler thought will break

Full on the dazzled brain—
But shall surely pass again
From all it made so sweet,
And leave the heart to ache,
And the torn life incomplete.

BERNARD WELLER.

BRACING.

BY CHARLES WORTE.

AFTER two visits my doctor told me it was not physic that I wanted, but absolute rest and change. I must go to the seaside, and at once; he suggests Beechington, as what I need most of all is a good bracing air. "You want bracing," he says; "you are out of tone, and Beechington air will do you more good than I can." I feebly remonstrate that I don't like Beechington, never did; can't I go somewhere else and be braced?

As I am not supposed in my present state to know what is best for myself, it is at length finally arranged between the doctor and my wife that she shall take me to Beechington. Then come directions as to my mode of life there—what I am to do, and what not to do. I am not to work, nor think if I can help it; I am to read very little, and smoke very little; bathe once a day, be out in the open air as much as possible; I am to go to bed early and get up early. It is wonderful what a special aptitude these doctors have for finding out the things you most dislike doing; those are the very things which in their autocratic way they will be sure to prescribe. The one or two little weaknesses you may have are the very things that will be forbidden. I am fond of smoking and reading; of course these are the things that are tabooed. From my earliest childhood I have always had a special dislike to going to bed early, and I positively abhor getting up early. Of course these are the very things I am told to do. I never had any great liking for any of the ordinary seaside resorts, except Brighton, and Beechington I like least of all; and yet it is the only place, it seems, where I can be braced.

The railway brings us down, and we are soon installed in lodgings, facing the sea, of course. This operation of bracing promises to be expensive. In my helplessness I sit down by the window: there is the boundless sea, the silent highway—the delight of the hardy Norseman and the terror of the squeamish. The waves are racing each other in to reach the sands, white-maned and swift. There stand the bathing-machines, like hooded gipsy-vans, solemn and mysterious, at present silent and deserted. I wonder if sea-bathing is really the unadulterated benefit that many people appear to imagine. No doubt a great many people bathe injudiciously, and do themselves harm. I have noticed that you never by any chance see the inhabitants of a watering-place bathing. Before nerves were invented men did not come rushing down steep places into the sea. I am ordered to bathe because I want bracing.

Our landlady is a widow, with a sharp red nose and rather watery grey eyes, which give her the appearance of having just been indulging in a good cry. Those eyes, however, appear to be very keen in looking after what is euphemistically

called the "main chance." And why not? She is very attentive and obliging, and I suppose her lodgers are her means of livelihood; why should she not make as much out of them—fairly of course—as she can? All people in trade appear to me to do much the same by their customers. The fact is, people who go to the seaside look at the subject of lodgings from one point of view only—that is, the lodgers' point of view. The landlady's view of the question is another aspect altogether, and I am afraid is but seldom taken into consideration. As an invalid I am an object of great interest and attention to this particular landlady; rather too much so, in fact, for I had not been here two days before she had expressed her fears confidentially to my wife that she wouldn't have me long.

She has a brother living with her, who, by the generally amphibious look about him, I at first supposed to be something in the seafaring line. What his profession really was I never knew; but to us he was certainly a "universal provider." Did we want fish for breakfast, it was, "Steve's gone out in his boat, and will bring some home;" and sure enough Steve would presently appear with a fair-sized pair of soles. Did we want a boat, Steve was on the spot with his, and ready to take us out for a row. When we inquired about the bathing-machines, it was Steve's to which we were recommended; and when we wanted a drive, Steve had a lumbering old landau and an ancient horse, and was ready to drive us anywhere. In addition to all this I have seen him, during his moments of leisure, mending his harness, his great sea-boots, his nets, and repairing and painting his bathing-machines. What other avocations he added for winter pastimes I do not know.

He was a slow, heavy man, and seemed both gentle and simple. His industry was marvellous; from some unearthly hour in the morning until after dark he was always busy. He was a bachelor, and reputed to be well off, according to Beechington ideas of wealth.

It is becoming dark, and one by one lights appear in unexpected places. The red lamp at the end of the pier is alight, quivering like liquid ruby in the sea below. A light flashes out at sea; another, still farther, shines with an intense brightness for a moment or two, and then disappears; others remain steady and piercing. These are the guardians of our coast, that look as though signalling to each other. There are not many people about, and the streets are refreshingly quiet; but from the shore comes that all-pervading, never-ceasing sound of the white line of breakers, as they roll and surge and lash and chafe and drag and tumble upon the shingly beach.

That night I go to bed with the crescendo of the surge in my ears, and in the middle of the night when I wake I still hear the soothing, splashing drag of the waves beating on the shore. It is a soothing sound, however; I soon fall asleep again, and sleep better than I have slept for weeks. Before going into training for this operation of bracing and following strictly the doctor's orders I determine to have this one day to myself and do just as I feel inclined. Accordingly, I lie in bed listening to the sea, and imagine I can see the waves rolling in twenty thousand abreast like a charge

of fairy cavalry, which disappear as they reach the shore. After being called three times I get up and go down to breakfast. A delicious sunshiny morning, the sea quite lively and brilliant with its diamond sparkle. The line of foam that breaks along the shore glitters like quicksilver. There are banks of purple clouds in the distance, rising from a broad green field of opaque emerald; and yonder is the dim blue line of land looking like consolidated clouds. It is a sight to make an invalid convalescent. I positively feel hungry, and we sit down to breakfast; meanwhile I keep my eyes turned to the sea. The bathers are out I see, bobbing up and down like floats under a nibble. The sea is rolling in, frothing and splashing about the red wheels of the bathing-machines, tumbling on the shore, and looking for all the world as though Neptune were sending in quantities of soapuds for the special benefit of the bathers. Amphibious-looking creatures in nondescript costumes and bare feet, are riding draggle-tailed horses deep into the sea, to drag up the bathing-machines, whose open doors announce their readiness to return to land. Every little thing appears to be crying out "Come out and be braced."

I take my seat by the open window and watch the bathers return. There go three young ladies with their hair all dank, laughing merrily. Here come some men who have the appearance of shipwrecked mariners. More bewitching maidens just budding into womanhood, with jaunty hats and pretty costumes, and prettier faces. Sirens still haunt the seaside, only their dress is more respectable, and they have given up playing upon harps. More wrecked-looking men going home from their morning dip. I wonder if all these people have come down to be braced!

But here come the children in groups of two and threes and fours; there is soon quite a little party of them, with their wooden spades grubbing and digging as though their future destiny was to be "navvies" or gold-diggers. These children are always fishing something out of the sea; all day long they are dipping into it, as if it were a lucky-bag, and bringing out the strangest things: crabs, star-fish, jelly-fish, shrimps, seaweed, rubbed-down pieces of glass, pebbles, and other shreds and trifles from the great marine-store shop—each and all affording an infinite amount of pleasurable excitement. They never leave the beach but to their meals; they paddle about, and join hands and dance in the water, and the wetter they get the happier they seem to be.

The sea is much the same here as elsewhere; it rolls in, and it rolls out, and the chief amusement of the visitors is to sit down opposite it, and stare themselves into blank idiocy by continuous looking at its broad and vacant face. The result is extreme sleepiness and tremendous appetites. The sands are now beginning to look like a laundress's drying-ground: bathing-dresses, towels, shoes, and other sundries are lying around in all directions. In the distance are ships in all degrees of dimness; the spars of some standing out in clear-cut lines, while others are as dim and weird-looking as the Flying Dutchman. The beach is becoming lively, a moving panorama of gay colours, the many-coloured parasols looking like a tulip-bed.

Here comes a little man, got up in what he

considers correct yachtsman costume—very wide trousers, pilot coat, round straw hat, and yellow slippers. His physiognomy proclaims him to be a native of Houndsditch or the neighbourhood. He stops to talk to the Coastguardsman, who, with his battered telescope under his arm, has been walking up and down for some time. I am not near enough to hear the conversation, but from their looks and actions I can give a good guess of its import. He is asking him about that large vessel in "the offing." All the men, I notice, as soon as they get here begin to talk about "the offing." This little man, who is about up to the Coastguardsman's shoulder, is putting on what he imagines to be the airs of a captain, and yet it is pretty safe to assert, if he came here by boat, that he would be sick before passing Gravesend.

At last we go out and walk slowly down to the pier; the air is delightful—so fresh and yet not cold, so balmy, so health-giving. We pass an old boatman with his little button-hole eyes, and telescope that looks as old and worn as himself. Very little individuality about these men; you might almost think it was the same individual that you meet at the various watering-places round the south coast, so much do they all resemble each other. What life and motion and enjoyment of it all there is in that group of children playing in the boats! Ah! there is the lifeboat with its padded-looking sides, lying quiet and peaceful enough now. Down by the pier some large buoys are fastened, that look like the floats of some Brobdingnagian fisherman. We go on the pier, but the sun is so hot that I am not allowed to remain long.

To-morrow morning I am to begin getting up early, and I have determined to bathe. Getting up for your first bath, to a nervous imaginative man, is quite a dreadful thing to think of the last thing on going to bed. I am to be called of course; I wake about an hour before the time, and lay expecting the knock; just as I am dozing off again I am startled nearly into a fit by my boots being dropped at the door. I get up, trying to make believe it was quite delicious, which it wasn't. I dress in a slovenly sort of style, without collar, and tie my handkerchief round my throat in a wisp-like fashion, put on my oldest boots, and buttoning up prepare to start, looking rather like a dilapidated smuggler. I find Steve's bathing-machines, and his representative hands me three tickets for three mornings' admission to the ocean. He puts these tickets in my hand in a slow and meditative manner, and then takes one back, I think he must be going to teach me a new game of cards, and is playing both sides. I am handed over as a victim to another man, the driver; I am given two towels, and sent up the steps of the machine. I am no sooner in than the thing begins to jolt and jump about so that I can scarcely keep my legs; I feel I am going out to sea. Suppose this crazy old cart should spring a leak! suppose it should break away and float out to sea!—what would become of me? More bumping and shouting; I begin to feel that I am like Jonah inside the whale. I undress and hang my things on the pegs all round. Ugh! this is not at all comfortable! The floor is gritty, the apology for a carpet is sticky with brine. A tremendous wave here comes thump against the door, as much as to say "Come out, and let's have a look at you;" and I hear

the swish-h-h of the water all round the machine I unfasten the door, kick down the hood, and here I am, a poor forked creature, shivering as if for charity. Here goes; and I dive from under the hood, as from a cave, into the wide, wide sea, and come to the surface with my eyes and ears and nose full of salt water and a decided taste of it in my mouth. The sand seems to be suddenly receding under my naked feet, and I begin to think I am to be swallowed up; just at that moment a big wave knocks me off my feet, and as I am recovering myself another slaps me on the back. I feel the blood coursing swiftly through my veins. Here come more waves, but I am on the look-out this time. This is becoming exciting: here goes for a swim. I breast the waves, but the tide is coming in very strong, and I don't make much way; but I am tossed and tumbled and slapped. More waves bigger than ever. I shout defiantly, "Come on!" Now I am bracing, and hard at it. I begin to feel another man. But time is up. I turn to look for my machine, and am surprised to find how far it is off. I soon get to the steps, however, and emerge in a rosy glow of invigorated and purified blood. I dress quickly, shouting "The hardy Norseman's house of yore is by the foaming wave." I give the signal, and the centaur comes splashing into the water: all at once a voice shouts "Right!" and a jerk nearly sends me off my legs. Arrived on *terra firma*, I jump on to the soft yielding sand; am wished "Good-morning," by the card-player and his mate, and depart at a rapid pace to finish my toilette and punish my breakfast. Already I feel another man—my chest expanded, my eyes brighter, my moral nature improved, and my physical nature developed.

One morning, when by reason of the intense heat the mist hangs over the sea, I and my wife stroll down to the beach to meet Steve by appointment. We are going for a sail in his boat; it will probably end in rowing, as the light breeze is even now dropping. The sea is emerald green; there is just a sparkle on the waves, and the surf glows like burnished gold. The shingle is flattened level by the rolling sea, which has left behind a refuse of scarlet roots and purple shreds of seaweed. We are off; there's just enough wind to fill the sail, and the boat ploughs through the water, which is like opaque sunshine. Steve, who is not much of a talker unless fairly launched on some familiar stream, is silent, and so are we as we drink in the fresh, crisp air and view the enchanting scene. Steve himself is quite a sight to look at in his indigo-coloured jersey that fits his brawny chest like a suit of mail, his enormous trousers reaching up almost to his arm-pits, his strong brown hands grasping the familiar oars, which he has just got out, as the wind has left us. I take one, and like two portions of the same body we bend simultaneously to our work.

"Now, ma'am—this to the wife, who was steering us—you keep her head straight for that point, that's the mouth of the river. Ah, here is the wind comin' agen to help us. Slack a little, sir! That's right." And we leap and dance again over the luminous water.

"No, ma'am, I can't see the wind, but I could see the little crackles on the water. That's what them Londoners often says to me, 'Why how could you see the wind a-coming?' Bless you, they never looks at the water! 'Mazin

ignorant they are, leastways most o' 'em!—Yes, ma'am, I've been to London," said Steve, tucking his oar under his knees. "I went up to the exhibition last year—what they called 'The Fisheries'—and a wonderful place it was; and I went to the 'Delphi Theatre—it was grand too; and I went up the Monument—there was a sight o' houses to be seen up there, all jammed together. How ever them London folks lives I can't make out; I felt as though I should be just choked all the time I was there—(Pull the left-hand tiller-rope a little ma'am. Steady! That's it!)

"We do have a wreck here sometimes. Only last winter we had a terrible storm. The sky had been lowering-like all day, and there had been a ground swell on, and towards night the wind got up, and the sea was just awful. When it did come it was down upon us all of a sudden, like. Well there was a brig come a-drivin' right in the bay there, before the gale; her mainmast was gone, and she didn't seem to answer to her helm. She was just a wreck and makin' water fast; and she was sot very low in the water. She sent up a rocket and we got out the lifeboat. We soon had her launched: the waves they was a-runnin' mountains high, but we rode over 'em first-rate: one moment we'd be balanced, as you may say, on the top of a wave, and the next down in a regular pit, with water all around us. I never see a worse sea, and the wind was enough to blow the teeth down your throat. Sometimes a wave would sort o' break before the wind, and then we'd be half-full o' water; but it would soon run out and we'd be going again.

"Yes ma'am, I was cox'n, and was standin' up-a-steerin' her when the biggest wave I ever saw broke right in front of us, and swept over the old boat, and precious nigh washed me overboard. As it was, we was all a-flounderin' about at the bottom. I tried to hold on to the tiller, but it nearly pulled my arms out of their sockets, and I was forced to let go. That moment did it, for she flew round, and the next wave came before I could recover myself, and caught us broadside and tipped us right over.

"Yes, ma'am, right over—emptied us out just as you might empty so many apples out of a basket. We had our jackets on o' course, and the old boat she righted herself directly—a regular good 'un she is. I come up close to her, and was soon in again, and then began to look round for my mates. Two on 'em got hold o' the ropes, and I soon had 'em in, and then I took the tiller and we rowed to the others.

"We had quite a chase after Bob White though; for he was carried quite away. He said a big wave took him, and sort o' flung him over so fur, and then he was rolled over and over, and carried along until he thought for sure he would be drowned.

"Oh, yes, ma'am, we did. We got straight again somehow, and we got to the ship at last; and a hard pull of it we had, and we saved the captain and seven of the crew; two of the poor fellows had been washed over before we got there. All on 'em was about half-drowned; they was Frenchmen, and when we got 'em round, up at the Sheaf, Lor' how they did chatter! Was they grateful? Oh, they was that; they just hidolized me. They used to foller me about and pat me on the back, and as often as I was willin' to stand drinks round, they was willin' to drink 'em."

As I saw that Steve was likely to hammer away at this same idea for another half-hour unless the conversation was turned, I pointed to some gulls that were wheeling and dipping round an object at a considerable distance, looking like specks of froth thrown from the waves, and remarked that there did not appear to be many about this part of the coast.

Steve turned round with a tender look in his eye, as though they were his own particular poultry.

"If you was to come down here in the winter, you'd see plenty on 'em; in the summer they mostly keeps away out at sea. You should see 'em round the Goodwin Sands (Steve called them the "Goodins") at low water, stalking about as large as fowls, lookin' out for drowned men."

Steve might be right, and rowing may not be any exertion, if you lean well back and pull the oar home; but I began to feel the perspiration oozing from every pore of my body. It was quite certain that I was not in the same condition that he was, and so the boat's head was turned, and we made for home.

We made several other excursions with Steve during our stay, and were always treated to some long-winded yarn. A chance observation of mine about some double-tailed, goggle-eyed Chinese gold-fish that I had once, started him off, and led to curious revelations about the devil-fish, the fiddle-fish, the stotter, and the dog-fish: the latter being the especial hatred of all fishermen everywhere.

"Lord! you should just see those beggars go for the fish in the net, and regular tear bits out of it to get at 'em. The fishermen can tell when they are comin'; they can smell 'em a long way off, they are so ranky."

One of my greatest delights was to climb the chalk cliffs, and, lying down on the half-burnt-up wild barley by the side of the chalky path, listen to the larks singing to the angels in the blue vault above; or to the spears of wheat rubbing against each other as they roll and billow before the breeze, like the wind playing over an animal's fur. The flowers nod and sway before it, mocking the bees that try to dip into their honey-cups. Or I watch the great orange-and-black humble-bee—that rifier of the summer flowers—flying in and out of the veined cups of the wild geranium, or sipping at the pink valerian that overhangs the cliff; or I turn and watch the ships far out at sea, that are apparently motionless, though with all sails set, "looking like painted ships upon a painted ocean."

All this time I am breathing the wonderful air that is so delightfully fresh and crisp, so balmy, so flower-kissing, so health-giving—an unpolluted and unbreathed air that no words can adequately describe, but which gives a redundant sense of pleasure—a freer pulse, a brighter eye, and a general sense of the delightfulness of the whole world. One need not seek for the miraculous "fountain of youth;" it is here.

But the time arrives when, having done our "bracing," and feeling quite another being for the operation, we must take our departure from this pleasant and cheering place, and go back to the carking cares of this work-a-day world. In a short time it will be a desolate desert of moping lodging-house keepers—no children, no laughing

sirens, no nothing. The little wooden spades will be hanging idle in the shops, in company with the little wooden pails, and the yellow shoes will gather dust until summer comes again.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. F. THERD.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN.

"BUT, Phillis," I made bold to ask her when she had told me this much, "why should your father suppose you would wish or attempt to leave him, when you were left by yourselves? Had there ever been anything said to him to give him an idea of the kind—ever any words between you—any reference—?"

"Not a word," she replied promptly; and then she came up to me, and putting her light hand, more like the touch of a spirit than of flesh and blood, on my arm, looked me full in the face.

"Mr. Francis," she said, "I told you once long ago that there was one question I was always asking myself—was I right or wrong to send him away, to send George away, without telling him why? I asked you, but you could not give me any answer: how could you, when you knew no more than he did? I could not tell you then, and I cannot tell you now. It is my secret, as it was my poor mother's; but what I did tell you then, if you remember, was that he threatened to turn us both out if I persisted about George, and he thought, perhaps, that it was only on her account I stayed—as indeed it was—and that whenever she was gone I should not mind how I defied him; as, indeed, I should not have minded," she added, as calmly as possible, "if he had still been there, and had still wanted me."

"Have you ever heard of him?" I asked her.

"No," she replied; "I have never heard. I have no means of hearing, unless he wrote to me himself, which he never has done, and never will do, unless—But this spring, you know—ah, I forgot, you don't know anything, and there seems so much to say. Before you hear of anything else, you are going to have your tea;" and she made as though for the door.

"No, Phillis, we are not," I said. "We are going to have a cosy cup of tea by-and-by, when we have talked matters over, and can enjoy it. Just now I want to hear, and you want to tell me, all about everything. But, to begin with, I know more than you suppose, for I met with the American paper with the advertisement in it—the advertisement for Richard Merritt."

A light came into her eyes which had not illumined them in the sight of mine for years—the light of Hope!

"You saw it!" she exclaimed slowly. "You—here in England! Oh, my God! if he were to see it too!"

"He may, my dear," I said gently; it was impossible to see her and not give her such small comfort as that. "What more likely? Let us hope he will. But do you tell me all about it.

What do you suppose became of the will?—for there was a will. Your father told me so himself, and his son's name was not in it. You were aware of that?"

She nodded an affirmative. Then, after a moment's pause—"He always told me I was to have all he had to leave," she said; "after the time you know. He made a sort of promise then; it was not I who asked him, but he looked upon it, I believe, as a sort of recompense to me for giving him up, as if I should ever have done it for the sake of that! There were times when I hated the thought of it; it seemed as if, when I did get it, it would be more like blood-money than anything else! I know I must seem to you to be talking nonsense. Oh, Mr. Francis, you are a happy man, that you cannot understand! But there were times, too, when I thought of it quite differently—when I thought that perhaps one day he might come back, as one has read of people coming back, even when they have not been heard of for years; and that then I should have it to give him, and—"

She broke down there for the moment, and stood with her face turned away from me—turned towards the open window, in at which came the scent of the roses and the hum of the bees, and all the thousand sweet signs and tokens that it was summer in the land. She recovered herself—as was her wont—very quickly, and went on telling me quite quietly and calmly how it had all happened at the last.

"He had not been himself for some days—not so well as usual even—and I wanted him to see the doctor, but he would not. He was afraid he would forbid his taking spirits, as he had done before, and he did not think he was as bad as he was—oh! no. And then, you know, it was just after breakfast—he was going out into the yard, and he staggered and fell. Mattie was there, and she thought for the moment he had caught his foot against something; but when she ran to him to help him up, and he never took any notice, but lay quite still, with one side of his poor face all twisted and strange, she knew what it was; she had seen it before—her husband died of it; and she called the men in to help her, and sent for the doctor, and did everything. But it was no good—there was nothing to be done for him. He came to, you know, before he died, for he lived more than a week after the 'stroke.' He knew us all, it was quite evident; but he could not speak or write, or make us understand anything, and he did try so hard—it was pitiful to see him! He wanted to write, for he made as though he were writing with his left hand—the hand that was well—on the counterpane; but when I gave him the pencil, it just dropped from his fingers—he could not use it. And oh! if you could have seen his face, you would never have forgotten it. If it were not for that," she added, speaking without any passion, with a sort of deliberate sadness, "I don't think I could ever have forgiven him; but I believe—I am certain—that whatever it was he had done with the will, whether he had hidden it or destroyed it—Heaven knows which!—he would have given his last chance of life, had he had such a chance, to tell me the truth then. I did not understand, I could not imagine, what it was that was troubling him; but somehow, by some sort of instinct, I suppose—perhaps because he had more

on his conscience with regard to me than to anybody else—I felt it had to do with me, and I stooped down and kissed him—the first real kiss I had given him since *then*—to show him I bore no malice, but forgave him. I thought it would please him. I understood afterwards, when we made our vain search—Mr. Needham, and Mattie, and I—for the will, which he had told me of long before—the will which left everything to me—it was strange, though, Mr. Needham knew nothing about it, had heard nothing of any will at all—when we turned the house, as you may say, inside out, and there was no sign of it, I understood then that it would have been better for him if I had kept my kisses to myself; that he must have suffered all the more, thinking that perhaps, after all, he was leaving me a beggar."

I turned cold as I listened. She might well say that he must have suffered! But what madness could have possessed the man? What madness has possessed the many before him, who have gone and done likewise?

She had had no one to advise her, she said, but Mr. Needham, and his advice had been for her to remain on at the farm, working it with the assistance of the headman, who had always taken the most active part in the management of it, as best she could—at all events until they saw what reply, if any, came to the advertisement for Richard Merritt.

"I don't think any one could have done better either by you or by him," I said candidly. "If he should turn up alive and well, it will be a great thing for him to find the place in working order, and he is scarcely likely to grudge you a home in it; and if he is dead, and proved to be dead, you come in as heir-at-law, and it is all right that way."

For the first time since we had been talking, the blood rose to her pale face, flooding it with crimson as she stood.

"I suppose I should," she said. "I wonder who it was that made the will, if it was not all talk—if there ever was one at all, excepting in his mind."

She went out, soon after this, to see about tea, and the rest of the evening went I could scarcely tell how, lounging about the place—in the farmhouse and garden, amongst the raspberries and strawberries, and under the old apple trees, where Merritt and I had smoked our pipes on some half-score of pleasant summer evenings, in the days before the brute in him had so miserably got the better of the man. Phillis did her best to put herself and her troubles on one side, and talk of other things; but it was hard work for her. She had read little and seen less, and an instinctive good breeding that she possessed made her shy of asking many questions. It was curious, though, to see how, when I told her of my own accord more than I had ever had leisure or opportunity to do before, of my own home in the great bustling city, of which, for all her womanhood, she had only the dim perception of a child, her eyes opened and sparkled, and the dulness and apathy seemed gradually to lift off her, and leave something visible again of the bright girl I had so long lost sight of. There were mother, father, and daughter, and was there nobody else but myself? Were there no little ones to run in and out, and be petted and make the house bright? She did not know why, but she always fancied, when she

heard of a house that was bright and pleasant to live in, that there must needs be children in it. Perhaps she wondered, poor thing! where the grown people, who knew what the world was like, were to find their laughter and their pleasantries! And when I told her there were indeed no children in the Elm-tree Road, but that the girl, who had grown up under my eyes there, was, at nigh twenty years old, as merry and as innocent as any child of them all, and that dulness could not be where she was, she gave the saddest little sigh—thinking perhaps, as I was thinking myself, of a girl who had once been very like our Lucy; and then she showered upon me more questions than I can remember—one and all about her. And I answered them all, and encouraged her in asking. I had seen nothing in her so natural, nothing so womanly, nothing so healthy and innocent and hopeful for the future, for many and many a long day! And then she was so grateful to her one friend, as if, poor thing! it was any fault of hers that she had not more! If ever I had thought her hard and wilful and self-reliant, all such thought of her died out of my mind that June evening, when I had her, for the first since her girlhood, to myself. I had pitied her so much, for a longer time than I could tell, seeing what she was and thinking always what she might have been; but I seemed to see now, for the first time, not merely what she might, but what she would have been.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINDING OF THE WILL.

My mind was so full of her, and of the strange position in which she found herself, no wonder that to go to bed was for me that night anything in the world but to go to sleep. I lay for hours tossing to and fro, and turning things over and over in my mind, most of all worrying about the will.

Phillis had told me distinctly there was not a corner or cranny in the house which had not been searched, and yet that somewhere—if we only knew where—the record of Stephen Merritt's last wishes was yet to be found I felt certain.

When I did at last fall asleep, with the dawn peeping greyly in at the window, it was not of the will I dreamt, however, nor yet of the man who had made it, but of his wife.

Exactly as I had seen her in the last hour of her life—just as clearly, just as distinctly—I saw her again in that Dreamland to which, more or less, she had always seemed to me to belong; exactly as she had conjured me then, so did she conjure me now; exactly as I had been forced to interrupt her then, so was I forced to interrupt her now; exactly where she had broken off then—at the same point in the same sentence—with the same pitiful, despairing cry, which had rung in my ears then and for long after—did she break off now.

"There, in the dressing-table—in the middle drawer. You take it out, and at the bottom——"

I seemed to repeat the words after her, and I

woke with them on my lips. With these words on my lips, and with my eyes opening on the homely old piece of mahogany, which seemed destined—sleeping or waking—to be my *bête noir*.

For the first time since they were first uttered in my hearing, the possibility of a meaning other than they had originally conveyed to me dawned upon my mind. For the first time it occurred to me to attach to the words, "Take it out," a significance I had not hitherto dreamt of. *Dawned upon me, did I say?—it flashed.*

"Take it out," she had said, "and at the bottom——"

Was it possible that to the first and foremost of her instructions—to all, indeed, that she had been permitted to give me—I had been virtually deaf? Was it possible that the first thing she had told me to do was the thing I had left undone?

But no! I remembered quite well, when I began to think of it, having taken the drawer out and narrowly examined the space into which it fitted, before I had abandoned my search in despair. The possibility of the letter having lodged there by accident had not escaped me. What *had* escaped me was the strangeness of my having been instructed to do, in the first instance, what one would only have thought of doing, as I had done it, as a last resource. Was it possible she had meant me to understand that before I could arrive at the letter the drawer, which she had distinctly told me contained it, must be taken out? When once I began to think it out, there was no other conclusion to be arrived at. Thence it took but one step, and that not a long one, to the further conclusion that about that which required such unusual treatment, there must be something unusual in itself.

I had been blockhead enough, goodness knows, this long time, but I was quick enough now. In far less time than it has taken me to tell it, I was out of bed and re-examining the dressing-table. I defy you anywhere to have found anything of the kind of more apparently simple and straightforward construction. It baffled me even then, with my mind made up to a surprise in it, for some little time. It was so well made, and the wood had—purposely, no doubt—been left in so rough a state at the back that there was no division visible, however closely one looked; and the space that was really left beneath the false bottom was so small that one was not struck by any unaccountable shallowness in the drawer itself. It was only when I had passed my hand over it more than once, feeling it with the greatest nicety, I hit upon a little inequality in the wood, which answered the purpose of a notch, and—suppressing with difficulty the cry of triumph which rose to my lips—drew the inner drawer out.

I was doomed for the second time to a disappointment; but the very thing which gave the *coup de grace* to the hope so suddenly revived in my heart—the hope of finding the only legacy Mrs. Merritt had left her daughter—that very thing crowned the more recent hope I had hardly dared to encourage at all with sudden fruition!

There was only one paper in the secret drawer, and that was the will!

(To be continued.)

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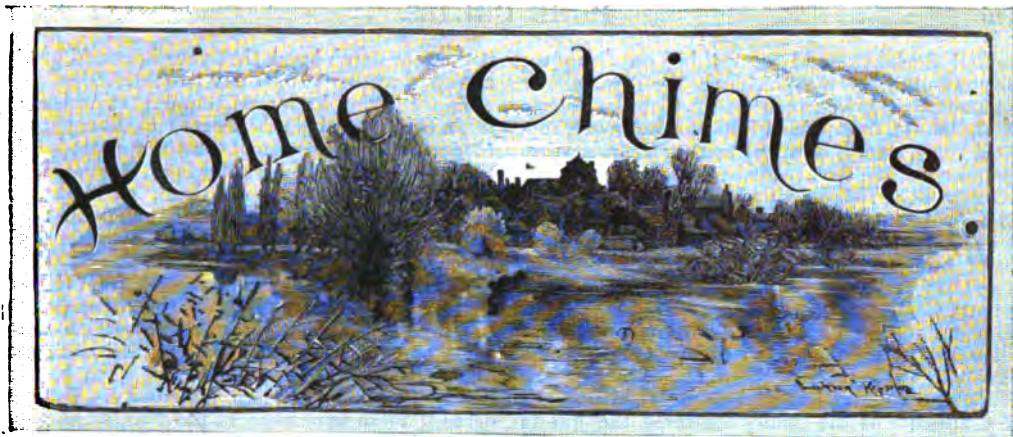
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

YE MYSTERIES OF GAUNT CASTLE:

A MATERIALISTIC ROMANCE.

BY RITSON STEWART.

CHAPTER I.

OMENS BY THE WAY.

IN a wild storm of wind and rain Lance O'Brien drove across the wet moss to Gaunt Castle. He had never visited it before since it came into his possession, although he had been its owner for more than a year.

He remembered it—as seen in his boyhood—as a melancholy place, poorly furnished and out of repair, and he had been in no hurry to establish himself within its bare walls as owner and occupant.

The late possessor had been a distant cousin, a poor man, with no income except what came to him from the lands round the castle, and, years ago, Lance had visited the place as his guest. This master of Gaunt Castle—Lance's predecessor—had been a happy man, in spite of limited means and shabby surroundings. He had been very popular with his tenantry, who were always ready to give him a flattering word in return for the easy good nature with which he treated them, and which had perhaps something to do with his poverty and shabbiness. His tenants were all in money difficulties, so was he. He sympathised with them, and they sympathised with him. The tenants all felt that their troubles and difficulties were owing to the "rogues" of creditors who pressed the master for money he had borrowed, and who ought to have been willing to sink their capital for his benefit, so that he might in return forbear to harass his tenants for the payment of rent. His harassing had, however, always been done in a friendly spirit.

"There is a rascal in Dublin bothering me for

money," he would say; "and you must really pay me a bit of last year's rent, if you can manage it, Pat, or we shall have the bailiffs in the place."

And Pat would vow to do his best, for he'd sooner his own pig was taken than one of his honour's cows.

When his honour died and left no son to succeed him (his only boy having been drowned a year before), the place, being entailed, went to a distant cousin, a young man who was known to be possessed of a comfortable income from other sources. He was a stranger and a rich man—from the Gaunt Castle point of view—and the tenants naturally could see no reason why they should put themselves out to pay their rent to *him*.

"If it had been Miss Nora now, the darling," it would have been another matter: so they all considered; but not a penny would go to her, so it was said, and more shame to the wicked laws and the men who made them.

It was, therefore, quite in a spirit of generosity, and almost as a tribute of loyalty to Miss Nora, the late owner's daughter, that the tenants declined to pay any rent at all after Mr. O'Brien's death. "Toimes" were singularly bad at that moment, it seemed, round Gaunt Castle, and the cows of the tenants had shown great unanimity in coming to sudden deaths about the same period; also the mortality among the pigs had been quite unprecedented; and the funeral expenses for aged relatives who had unexpectedly died in every direction, were enough—according to all accounts—to embarrass the most prosperous community.

Young Lance O'Brien—being pleasantly occupied elsewhere—had put his new estate into the hands of an agent, and, without thinking much about it, expected it to bring an immediate increase to his income. He had hitherto dealt with tenants of another sort—presumably unencumbered by dying cows and aged relatives—and he expected his rents to be paid; nay, he insisted that they should be paid.

He was informed that the estate needed a great deal of money spending upon it; the castle must be put into repair before it was habitable; the land

wanted draining, and everything on the place required altering or replacing before it was really satisfactory. It was absurd then that the income of the estate, from which funds for improvements must come, even if he spent none of it on himself, should cease the moment it became his.

He told the agent to do his duty to the estate, and the result was that the tenants hated their new landlord. Lance O'Brien kept far away, and heard little of the enmity he had excited; but none the less did the more indignant spirits around Gaunt Castle vow vengeance on the wicked stranger, if ever he ventured within its walls.

He had not intended so to venture for some time to come. He had been one of a pleasant party at a country house; but the sudden death of a member of the family scattered the guests and set Lancelot unexpectedly at liberty. He had no other engagement which he could take up at the moment, no business which required his presence; he therefore resolved to "run over" to Gaunt Castle, and see for himself how things were going on there.

He was not expected at the place; he had to hire a car at the nearest station, and drive a score of miles or so over a desolate bog, while the rain all the way made patriotic efforts to drive him back. He travelled with a servant named Cummings, whose concern for his master's discomfort—and his own—was very great.

The car-driver had shown some interest and curiosity when engaged to take the two travellers to Gaunt Castle.

"Sure and it'll be the young master himself?" he said, looking very earnestly at Lance O'Brien.

"Of course it is," said Cummings testily. He was displeased at this sudden and uncomfortable journey, and still more displeased at the humiliating manner in which his master was likely to arrive at his new abode.

The drive across the bog was a silent one. The persistently beating rain discouraged conversation; the weather and the landscape were alike depressing to contemplate.

At last the rain ceased for a few moments to pour from the low clouds; a shimmer of water—not falling nor rushing, but stationary water—was seen ahead, denoting the presence of a lake; the road appeared to wind round it. Beyond that was a blurred mass of trees, and the driver pointed to these with the information that Gaunt Castle was just behind them. He observed also that it was just about here that the "boys" had drowned Captain Rafferty's agent three years before.

"And no one has been punished for the crime yet," said Lance O'Brien; "it's a disgrace to the country that such men should go free."

"And who would your honour be punishing for it then?" inquired the driver with politeness, "when the whole countryside's in it, it isn't likely one would tell of another."

A wretched little collection of cottages straggled along the shore of the lake at this point, and the wild-looking inhabitants came out to look at the stranger. At the last cottage the driver pulled up suddenly, threw down the reins, and jumped out.

"What are you stopping here for?" Lance asked sharply, "when we're in sight of the Castle."

The horse was thirsty, the man said. "And is

it the poor dumb beast that your honour'd grudge a drop of wather to on a day like this?"

Lance felt as he looked round that water was not a thing of which it seemed necessary to be economical; heaven and earth appeared alike to be soaked and overflowing; there was a moment's truce between them, earth having perhaps protested to heaven that she could hold no more without drowning; but there was the promise of another downpour soon.

A bucket of water was brought from the cottage, and while the horse drank the villagers stood round and stared. Nobody begged, which somewhat surprised Lance; but he noticed more men among the idlers than ought to have been at liberty in an industrious community. He wondered if these were some of the "boys" who had drowned the agent—or they might be his own insolvent tenants. He felt that altogether the country was an uncomfortable one to pass through. He was glad when the driver took his seat and the horse trotted on without interruption to the gates of Gaunt Castle.

CHAPTER II.

A DISMAL WELCOME.

THE Castle itself did not offer a very inviting reception to its new master. The old couple—man and wife—who had charge of it, came to the door in the wind and rain (for the truce between earth and sky was already over), and uttered exclamations of astonishment, and—as it appeared to Lance—of dismay. The last thing that they appeared to expect of him was that he should get down, and take refuge indoors.

They assured him, with many alacks and appeals to the saints, that there was no decent accommodation for a gentleman in the Castle. The roof wanted repairing; the windows would not shut; the doors did not fit; the rain came in all over. On the whole, it appeared from their description that the inside of the Castle was rather a wetter place than the road outside.

The man Cummings was exceedingly anxious for his master to go on to the good inn which could be found—so the old people declared—five miles further along the road. The next day they would be better prepared for the master, thus reasoned the worthy couple; they could not, indeed, mend the roof meanwhile, but the weather might improve, and they would mop up all the floors, and try to get the furniture dry in the interval.

Lance, however, would yield to no persuasion; he was determined to end his journey here; and the car-driver unexpectedly took his part, speaking with considerable roughness to the old people, who at last ceased to oppose, and, with lamentations and apologies, ushered master and man into the kitchen.

Then the driver took up his reins and drove off to the distant inn. He had his own reasons for not returning that night by the way he had come. He had given information as to the identity of the traveller in the village through which they had passed; and, with the mingled carelessness and caution which seem to work so largely towards the success of Irish conspiracies, he did not care to be

cognizant of the precise consequences of his own proceedings.

The kitchen of the Castle seemed to be the only really habitable room within its walls, and the presence in it of a pig and some poultry rendered even this spot unattractive to the new-comer.

"You must light a fire somewhere else, and then get me something to eat," he said to the old people.

"The Castle's haunted, every bit of it, except this room," they declared; "and your honour'd better stay here."

"Then the walking lady walks yet?" said Lance with a smile, remembering a story he had heard in his boyhood.

"And will walk as long as the old family's kept out of the place," murmured the old woman.

"The old family? There's none left of it but Miss Nora," observed Lance, good-naturedly, as if resolved that circumstances should not conquer his temper.

"And it's only a Nora O'Brien that can keep the ghost down in her grave," old Bridget muttered again.

"Eh? So I have heard, I remember. The walking lady was a Nora O'Brien herself, was she not? Turned out for a step-daughter or something?"

"And she cannot rest in her grave, poor thing, when there's not one of the old race and the same name living and walking in the Castle," acquiesced the old woman, with a ghoul-like nod.

"And so the daughter of the house is always christened Nora, and has to sleep in the ghost's room to keep the curse away. I remember all about it," said Lance lightly. "I'm one of the old race myself, you know, and I would rather have the company of a ghost than a pig any day; so get me a light, my good woman, and show me the way."

At this moment Cummings and the old man (who seemed far less alert and intelligent than his wife) returned from a tour of observation. Cummings declared that he had not seen a room fit for his master to dine in.

"We must make the best of what there is," said Lance, following his servant, in order to inspect in his turn the available apartments.

Their condition was discouraging in spite of the soothing assurances of the old man that they could be made straight and comfortable; he had abandoned the kitchen idea as hopeless, and seemed only anxious that they should immediately select one of the apartments which he showed to them; then, he said, he would at once light a fire.

But Lance was not satisfied.

"Have we seen all?" he inquired, incredulously. "There must have been some room which your old master used and kept in order to the last. These cannot have fallen into such absolute disrepair since his death; they must have been shut up and neglected before that. Which was the sitting-room he used himself?"

But nothing farther was to be got out of the old man, except rambling regrets for his late master, and lamentations over the poverty of the place.

"Where does that passage lead to?" asked Lance suddenly; "there is a door at the end."

"That? Nothing—nowhere!" the old man declared; and, falling into a palsy of terror, as if he had seen the ghost himself, he beseeched the gentleman, by all the saints, not to go that way.

Lance straightway went, and, opening the door at the end of the passage, found himself in a large, low room, very old-fashioned in style, but tolerably well furnished, and in perfectly good condition.

"Of course, this is my uncle's library. I remember it perfectly," he said at once, "though I seldom came into it. This is the room to dine in."

Old Patrick had followed him with shaking limbs, and now fell into a strain of wheedling persuasion, of which the object was to induce the master to abandon this room. The chimney smoked; no fire would burn in the grate; there were such draughts that the candles would be blown out; there was a damp mould on the walls, which would give the gentleman the fever. Patrick had a long list of friends of his own who had suffered grievous sickness and misfortune after rashly partaking of supper in this apartment. Some had even died—all those, for sure, who were not yet alive. There was, according to his account, danger in the very air of this innocent-looking place.

Lance was obdurate; he would have dinner—or supper—there and nowhere else. Patrick must light him a fire without delay; then the place would look comfortable. The evident anguish of the old man when these commands were laid upon him seemed rather dull to the young master; he fancied that some superstition or prejudice must be influencing the ancient retainer of the dilapidated Castle.

He himself lingered a moment in the room to examine its capabilities, and when he returned to the kitchen it was to hear Patrick announcing, in a tone of genuine distress—

"The saints preserve us all! but the gentleman's for having a fire lighted in the master's room!"

"You'll never do it?" said his wife. "You'll never do it."

"Not unless I'm burnt alive first!" declared Patrick, who perhaps felt that when he had become a ghost himself, he would have less reason to fear ghostly indignation.

He had made up his mind certainly. Entreaties, threats, remonstrances—all were of no avail to change his resolution. A dogged sullenness fell upon him, as if, indeed, he was prepared for persecution and ready for martyrdom; he wasted no more words on the matter, but went about in silent obstinacy, setting the table for supper, while his wife busied herself with the cooking. Neither of them would put a hand to the lighting of the library fire.

"Sure, if the gentleman's cold, he can warm himself in the kitchen," Bridget would remark; or, "Sure, if the gentleman's cold, he'd better have the fire in his bed-room, for it won't be long that he'll be eating his supper."

But she was as deaf as her husband to all commands that a fire should be made in the library itself.

That was out of the question altogether.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHIMNEY SMOKES.

At last Cummings, who had been putting his master's sleeping-room in order, came downstairs, and declared that he would light the fire himself. He was assured that there was no wood, and, when the wood was found, there was not a scrap of paper to be had in the house, unless, as Bridget scornfully suggested, he should tear the paper off the walls themselves, for *that* was damp enough for anything. He went upstairs to hunt among his own stores, and when he came down again, armed with an old railway guide, it was to find that in his brief absence someone had poured a bucket of water over the wood, and made it unfit to light.

Patrick and Bridget swore that they had not touched the wood; sure and then hadn't it been out in the rain and the wet, and wasn't it likely to be soaked through? Thus they protested in their innocence.

"The wood was dry enough when I found it at the back of your cupboard," retorted Cummings.

"And it isn't half an hour since I carried the bits of it in myself," Bridget declared, "and how could they be dry since then? Look at your master's coat and see if that's dry, you villain, taking away a poor old woman's character that's been a good servant more years than you've been born."

"If you brought them in yourself, why did you say you had none?" asked Cummings.

"Because I knew they were wet and of no use at all, at all," answered the old woman, whom it was not easy to catch tripping.

Just then a gust of wind blew open the kitchen door, and the neighing call of an impatient horse was heard near at hand.

"Can't you keep the door fastened then?" said Bridget to her husband, sharply.

"What can that be? Have you a horse in the stable?" asked Lance in surprise.

"The saints preserve us! but I don't know what it is," replied Patrick, trembling exceedingly, and struggling with the door, which the wind tried hard to keep open.

"You old fool!" exclaimed his wife contemptuously, "don't you remember that Patrick O'Dowd's boy left his pony here while he went over the hill to see his cousin? But sure enough I never told you that he'd been at all."

At last, after much difficulty, and by the sacrifice of some railway novels, which Cummings found in his master's trunks, the fire in the library was lighted. While the operation was going on Patrick lingered about the room with horror-struck countenance, as if indeed some awful act of sacrilege were being committed.

Bridget kept her self-possession and attended to her cooking; but from time to time her husband went to confer with her. The result of this conference was apparent after a temporary absence of Cummings from the library. The fire which he had so carefully made had been put out very adroitly while he was out of sight.

He could stand this treatment no longer, but went up to complain to his master, who was now dressing in his own room.

Lance came downstairs, determined to superintend the lighting of the fire himself. His patience

was almost at an end, and he was beginning to regret that he had not travelled five miles further to the comfortable inn spoken of.

And now the chimney, which had before proved tractable to wary treatment, and had not smoked more than was reasonable in a chimney which had been out of use for a year or so, became utterly unmanageable, and justified the worst things which had been said of it by Patrick. It refused to receive any of the smoke of the kindling fire, which was therefore compelled to throw itself on the hospitality of the room itself, and which accordingly took possession of the whole apartment to the exclusion of other guests.

Old Patrick triumphed. Hadn't he told the gentleman that it must be so? sure and it would have been better to believe the old man at first.

"There must be some reason for the change," Lance declared suspiciously. "The fire will have to go out, that's certain; then we must examine the chimney."

Patrick declared that it wanted sweeping, that the chimney-pots were all broken, that bricks had fallen in near the top, and gave fifty good reasons where one ought to have been sufficient.

Lance paid no attention to him, but watched Cummings scatter the embers and put out the fire; then he proceeded to the examination of the chimney, in which he was much incommoded by the officiousness of Patrick; for the old man poked mortar out and brought soot down zealously, in his desire to discourage the investigating propensities of his new master. The fireplace was a peculiar one, with a deep recess on each side of the hearth within the chimney-piece; these recesses seemed foolish and useless things, as they were too smoky to hold seats, but they could not account for the want of draught in the chimney itself. Lance did not, therefore, investigate them very carefully, but proceeded to poke upward, with a stick, above the grate, and soon came across a decided obstruction. A soft pulpy substance appeared to occupy the body of the chimney and effectually to close it. Further poking and dragging brought down a large wet blanket, which had evidently been recently crammed into the aperture.

"Here comes the explanation," observed Lance; "a very damp and bulky one, indeed."

"The old man must have put it there while I was out of the room," said Cummings with indignation, looking after the retreating form of Patrick, who was off to the kitchen to inform his wife of the latest event.

"It's a very odd thing that he is determined either to starve or to suffocate me," remarked Lance, overcome by this last proof of the Irishman's desperate resolve; "he must have some mysterious prejudice against the use of this room. We won't continue such a ridiculous struggle. Put a fire in my bedroom. As soon as supper is over I'll go and sit there."

Patrick made no objection to the lighting of the fire upstairs, but he did not offer to light it himself. In other respects his behaviour changed to one of obsequious attention. He insisted on remaining in the room to wait at supper; he was most persuasive in his efforts to induce the master to do justice to his wife's dishes, and when not occupied in this way he discoursed to himself in a strange and rambling fashion.

"Sure enough I'm to be trusted, and I'll not forget what I have to do: and when it's the right time, then I'll do it; only to have patience, that's all that's wanted," so he murmured and muttered, more or less audibly, as he wandered round the table, and cast strange glances of apprehension in every direction.

Perhaps he was trying to propitiate the unseen spiritual powers who had lately been offended; perhaps he was promising Lance to make amends for recent disobedience by future zeal; perhaps he was only consoling himself by self-praise for the abuse which Cummings had lavished upon him.

Supper over, he attended Lance to his room with much servility.

"Sure and if there's anything your honour wants, you've only to call old Patrick, and he'll bring it to your honour the next minute."

"How if I should want the library fire lighted?" suggested Lance.

"Sure, then, it's me and Bridget that'll see to it and clear it out ready for your honour's breakfast to-morrow; leastways for dinner if not for breakfast."

"H'm. It's at night, then, it's dangerous to light it, is it? I wonder why. Perhaps the walking lady wants the room to herself."

"Your honour has never seen her? Sure that can't be!" exclaimed Patrick in genuine alarm.

"No, nor heard so much as the rustle of her skirts. But if I should see her, what then? She won't hurt me."

"Don't speak to her; don't speak to her; for your life if you do!" said Patrick with earnestness.

Lance laughed. "I sha'n't have the chance. Good night. Get me a nice fire and a good breakfast *somewhere* to-morrow."

As the old man departed, Cummings came forward with a solemn countenance.

"I think you'll do well to keep your door well locked to-night, sir; I don't like the ways of these people."

"Pooh!" said Lance; "they are only a couple of old fools; full of prejudice and superstition, and vexed to be disturbed in their idleness."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LADY WALKS.

It was late before the kitchen was deserted that night. Patrick repeatedly pressed Cummings to go to bed and rest after his long journey; Cummings politely replied that he was not tired, and would wait until Patrick went. He was full of uneasiness and suspicion, and declined to leave the old couple to cogitate mischief together.

At last Lance heard the footsteps and voices of the trio on the stairs and in the passages. Cummings locked himself into a room near at hand, and the old people went on to their sleeping-place somewhere beyond.

Lulled rather than disturbed by the sound of the wind and rain, Lance fell asleep, to be awakened after a time by a dream of stealthy movements. Something wholly unlike the fierce swish of the rain on the panes, or the rattling of window and

door, or even the steady rush of the water from the roof and spouts, had disturbed him. He felt sure that some one was creeping past his door.

He got up, left his room cautiously, and followed the retreating sound. It went down the stairs and ceased at the library door. Lance, who was creeping on behind, struck a match suddenly and revealed old Patrick with his hand on the knob.

"The saints preserve us!" exclaimed the old man, falling back on his favourite exclamation; "what can your honour be doing here?"

"Looking after you," said Lance coolly. "What do you want in that room?"

"Nothing whatever; nothing at all, at all!" Patrick protested.

"Then it will be the same to you if I lock the door and put the key in my pocket; and now," said Lance, suiting the action to the word, "you'll just turn round and march back before me to your own room; and I warn you that it will be as much as anybody's life is worth to pass my bedroom door before daybreak."

Many were the old man's entreaties that he should be left downstairs alone; various his excuses for the eccentricities of his proceedings; but all his efforts failed to move Lance's resolution. Patrick was obliged to trudge back to his room with Lance behind him.

Lance was little inclined to sleep after this last adventure. The mystery of the old man's movements disturbed him. Having dressed himself, he sat up in his room, imagining continually that he heard inexplicable noises. After a time he could stand the perplexity no longer, but determined to visit the forbidden chamber once more. He made his way downstairs as cautiously as before, for the storm had abated, and the noise outside was consequently less; a gleam of moonlight even shone into the passage in a watery and uncertain manner, and illuminated half the staircase.

When he reached the library door he paused to listen, and felt certain that he heard a sound of movement within. For a moment it flashed across his mind that he was acting in a foolhardy fashion, and that he had better have brought Cummings with him; his pistol was, however, in his hand (some one had advised him not to travel without one), and he opened the door suddenly.

In the centre of the room, arrested as it were by his entrance, and with the shaft of moonlight from the window just striking the edge of her long dark gown, stood a female figure.

This was not what he had expected to see—a lady, tall and stately, with a dark and closely-fitting garment falling to her feet—rather had he looked for a man with a blackened face, or a whole band of Irishmen with cudgels. The hand which held the pistol in act to fire dropped by his side, and at the same moment the tall figure slunk farther back into the shadow, but silently.

It was with an effort that Lance broke the stillness; the warning of old Patrick recurred to his mind, and there was something impressive in the sudden appearance and stately stillness of the figure itself; but he roused himself to say, politely, "I must apologize; may I ask also what you require in my house?"

"Solitude," was the softly breathed reply.

"Oh!" answered Lance, "that is a strange request—a very Irish one, you will permit me to say—to make to its owner."

"I am very Irish," said the same low, steady voice.

"You are—perhaps—" suggested Lance, with great politeness—"the walking lady of Gaunt Castle?"

"Perhaps."

The voice was very monotonous, but also very sweet, and the figure, after that first gliding movement into the shadow, stood perfectly still.

"In that case," he replied somewhat sarcastically, "I need not apologize for the locked door, which cannot have occasioned you any inconvenience."

"I have not asked for apology, but solitude. And when a lady asks this from a gentleman"—this was uttered with more emphasis—"it is not usually refused."

"But if the lady happens to be—a ghost?" remonstrated Lance; "is not the occasion a little novel? Are not the regulations more ambiguous?"

"I do not think so."

"Then I may go away, and lock the door as I locked it before?"

"I only ask you to *go away*,"—with irritation.

"Would it be at all inconvenient to you if I struck a light?"

"*Exceedingly* inconvenient."

"May I ask why? Should you be compelled to fade out of existence?"

"Much worse than that: you might see my face."

"Ah, you become frank."

"Because I know"—here the voice softened again, though the figure did not move, "that I am speaking to a gentleman, one of the race of O'Brien."

"Thank you. After that I can say no more. I am sorry that I have persisted in intruding on your domain. This room is sacred to you, I presume. Permit me to wish you good-night."

He retreated, closed the door behind him, and, after a moment's hesitation, locked it. He was not inclined to trust his fair though ghostly visitor too far. He remembered the mysterious proceedings of Patrick, he remembered the call of the horse from the stable; he was not sure that he might not be, after all, in the midst of some dangerous conspiracy.

He struck a light and with some difficulty found his way to the sleeping room of the old couple. Patrick was on the alert and came out to meet him.

"Tell me what lady is hidden in the library," Lance demanded.

Patrick swore that there was no lady; so did his wife, who soon joined the disputants on the landing. If the master had seen any one it was the ghost, the walking lady herself, "Ould Miss Nora," and no other.

"She was young enough, I tell you," said Lance angrily.

"Sure and ould Miss Nora's young too; it's only that she's been dead these many years, so we call her ould."

Refusing to be put off by these tales of a supernatural visitor, Lance insisted on old Patrick coming with him to the library to see for himself. Whoever the lady might be, a ghost or a mortal woman, he felt that Patrick was in the secret, and that he was betraying no confidence in taking the old man to the forbidden room.

But when they reached the library and Lance

unlocked the door, it was to reveal a silent chamber tenanted only by moonlight and ancient furniture. No trace of any recent presence was there, nor sign of any recent escape. The furniture was undisturbed, the windows were fastened inside. In vain Lance, whose scruples vanished as the mystery heightened, struck a light and examined the place carefully, moving every article of furniture and not leaving unexamined any space in which a child might hide.

Cummings had been disturbed by the noise and joined his master; he assisted in the search, though Lance only told him that "some one" had certainly been in the room when he locked the door.

No one was to be found. The place was empty, and yet there was no means by which it could have been vacated in his absence.

As he pondered on the mystery in growing perplexity a knocking was heard at an outer door. Patrick had been assisting in the search with much apparent zeal, and many assurances that it must have been the lady herself that his master had seen; he now went to discover the meaning of this new disturbance, and returned with a horror-struck countenance.

"The blessed saints preserve us! but the boys are outside, and they swear that they'll have your life."

CHAPTER V.

A VISIT FROM THE "BOYS."

"Who are the 'boys,' and what do they want?" asked Lance, with fresh bewilderment. He had an unpleasant recollection of having heard the expression used recently in a disagreeable connection, but it was difficult to get any explanation from Patrick.

He declined to say who the "boys" were. "Sure, they were 'the boys;'" hadn't he told his honour so? and when they came on a murderin' errand, there was no turning them back. The doors were all old and the locks were all rotten; and why hadn't the young master gone on to the inn, as he'd begged him to do? Such was the melancholy burden of his story.

Bridget put in an appearance here, as terror-stricken, but more self-possessed than her husband.

"You old fool! go and tell them he isn't here; tell them he went on to the inn with Pat McAlister."

"They won't believe me, and there'll be murder done. If only we'd somewhere to hide him!" moaned the old man.

He and Bridget went off together, and tried the effect of negotiation from an upper window, but presently Bridget came back with a tale of failure.

"They won't go away till they've been through the house," she said; "and sure, they'll break the door if we don't let them in."

"Have you no firearms?" asked Lance; "can't we protect ourselves?"

"Sure, and you haven't the ghost of a chance, if once they catch sight of you. There's ten of them there, and Patrick can't lift a finger against them; what would his life be worth utter in the country?"

"I might talk to them, and make them hear reason. I've done them no harm."

"You've sent them the bailiffs, and you've turned out Miss Nora—the darling! If once they see you, they'll have your life, for sure."

"Can't I get out at the back-door?" asked Lance, who was not wanting in courage, but perceived that the odds were enormous against him, and knew that Cummings was worth nothing in a fight. "You've a horse in the stable, I know."

"And worse luck! Any night but this—any night but this—I'd have known what to do with ye. No. They're watching back and front, and—Lord have mercy on us!—there's the kitchen door broken in. For mercy's sake, keep back and don't show yourself."

She rushed away to add her remonstrances and protestations to those of the old man; there was heard the hubbub of many voices, loud in anger and threatening.

"We must lock this door and make the best of it," said Lance; "we can't escape by the window, for the moonlight is full on this side of the house. I have a pistol, and will defend myself as well as I can. You have nothing to do with the quarrel, and had better not interfere."

"There's a hiding-place in the house somewhere," said Cummings breathlessly; "that old rascal said as much, but he would not tell me where. I'll get it out of him yet if I can;" and he slipped away into the passage, hoping to get speech of one of the old people, while the other was parleying with the intruders.

He had shut the door behind him: in the moonlight Lance stood alone, with his eyes fixed upon it, listening to the yet distant voices in dispute.

Suddenly he felt a gentle touch on his shoulder, like the slow dropping of a leaf on a still autumnal day. Turning, he saw the mysterious Lady of Gaunt Castle standing beside him, with a finger on her lip.

She lifted her hand from his shoulder, and beckoned; mutely he followed her. Straight into the hollow of the great fire-place she walked; then turned abruptly to the left, where was the deep recess or chimney-corner. To his amazement, she passed through this out of his sight, revealing the fact that there was a narrow and concealed passage. He followed her, feeling his way as he went, and found her waiting in the darkness to close behind them an iron door, which shut in the recess at the corner, and concealed the passage beyond. There was another abrupt turn, then a few steps, and he was in a dark little chamber, in the wall behind the fire-place, almost in the chimney itself. An aperture somewhere in the wall permitted sounds to enter freely from the room.

As he reached this spot a hand, cautiously feeling, grasped his, and a voice whispered—

"You are safe here; only be still and silent. No one knows the way to this place, except me and the old people, and they will die sooner than tell."

Lance lifted the soft hand to his lips and kissed it; it seemed the only way in which he could express his gratitude. Her sweet voice and gentle touch thrilled him so pleasantly in their contrast to the harsh tones which he could hear approach-

ing, that he could not bear to nourish a lingering doubt of her good faith.

"Your presence here has nothing to do with this—attack?" he asked in an undertone.

"No, no! Could you ever think it? It was all an accident that I was here to-night; and you came, and I did not want to see you; so I hid myself; and then you made it impossible for me to get away. The rain had kept me before, but I never meant to stay—all night. I did not want you to know that I had come. That was why the old people begged you to go away."

"I am deeply grieved. If I had only known——"

"But I did not want you to know; and now I don't want you to know—who I am."

"I will never try to find out," he said at once; then half repented his promise as soon as it was made; especially as she said, "Thank you!" with a simple but grateful acquiescence which seemed to close the subject.

A moment afterwards she whispered, "Hush! they are coming here."

And certainly the distant hubbub was approaching, angry and remonstrant voices mingling in one discord. Apparently the house had been searched and the seekers warily kept from this room until the last. Bridget was still protesting that the young master had gone away leaving only his servant to make things straight. How she had explained the appearance of the recently used bedroom, Lance could not imagine; perhaps she had succeeded in putting it in order before the boys entered it. Certainly her quickness and ingenuity prompted her to lie as readily on his behalf as she had done to his hindrance. The boys themselves appeared to regard her with some respect, and her husband was glad to leave to her the front of the battle.

Cummings had been tied down in a kitchen chair to prevent trouble, with many threats that he should be made to speak if his master was not found without his aid.

"Sure and is it the likes of this place a gentleman would be staying in?" Bridget demanded, "they've better rooms at the inn any way."

But here one of the men called out that some one had been having supper in that room, and a fire too.

Bridget explained that the gentleman had had a bit of supper before he drove off again. She showed no astonishment at the disappearance of her master, whatever she might have felt; and the boys began to think that perhaps she spoke the truth, and their prey had escaped them. If he had been in hiding anywhere, would not his servant have hidden too?

Some of the more riotous of them declared, however, that if he had supped there, so would they. They ordered Bridget to bring them of her stores and to light the fire again.

She tried to coax them into the kitchen, but, as if they suspected a trick, they proved as obstinate as Lance himself had been; and presently a pleasant warmth was perceptible in the dark chimney room where he and his unknown companion stood in silence.

The pleasant warmth increased to disagreeable heat, and for the first time Lance realized what the consequences of his lighted fire might have been.

"You were here when it was lighted before?" he whispered, as together they sprang back as far

as possible from the hot wall which separated them from the hotter chimney.

"Yes, hush!" she whispered back again.

"They cannot hear," he said; "they are making too much noise themselves. Why you might have been burnt alive—brute that I was!"

"You did not know; and Bridget would not have let it go so far."

"You are scorching now. I will go out and speak to them. You shall not endure this longer."

"It is nothing; I don't feel it; no, no," and she clung to him resistingly; "if it gets very bad I will go myself."

"You!"

"Why not? They won't hurt me. And I don't mind them seeing me."

"Ah, I am the hated one from whom you hide yourself. You share the feelings of the district evidently."

"Hush! listen!"

There was a loud swish as of water on the roaring fire, a moment's silence, then a burst of angry voices.

Bridget was heard in reply; *she* was not going to have the old master's room used for a drunken riot; so she said.

"I don't believe it's that you're thinking of," said one man, shrewder than the rest, and shrewder than Lance had been; "I've heard it said that there's a secret room behind that chimney, and she's got some one hiding there. We'll have him out yet."

"Stay here! I am going! it is quite safe! Listen, and you will hear; only *stay*," whispered the unknown lady, and breaking free from Lance's detaining hand she made her way nimbly down the intricate passage and step, and landed in the light of the room while he was still groping after her blunderingly. Such a silence followed her sudden appearance that he paused to listen.

CHAPTER VI.

A KINDLY GHOST.

"WELL, good people, you all know me, I think," he heard her clear voice say; "and you see now who Bridget has in hiding."

There was a murmur of voices, low and astonished, but withal respectful:

"Miss Nora herself!" some one said.

"Yes," she answered proudly; "and it isn't likely that Nora O'Brien would be hiding in the same house as the man you're looking for."

A clever demurrer here asked why she had hidden herself at all.

"Sure, and we'd niver hurt a hair of your head!"

"I didn't want any one to know I had been here, except Bridget and Patrick. I hid from *him* when he was here, and then I hid from you. I am proud enough not to like it to be known that I've come to my father's house when it belongs to *him*; yet I couldn't help coming, because I was staying near. And the ruin came on, and I couldn't get away."

She appeared to be telling her tale to enlist their sympathies and divert their thoughts; and

she partly succeeded. Murmurs of compassion, mingled with maledictions on Lance, were heard in reply.

"And it's your own house that it ought to be this night, Miss Nora, mavourneen—oh, the villain! if we could but catch him!"

"I made up my mind never to see him again," said Nora; "and I rode over here just to have a last look at the old place before he came back to it. But I'll tell you what I'll do now for your sakes. I'll speak to him myself, and ask him not to be so hard on you all; perhaps I can get him to behave differently, if you'll promise me not to follow or harm him till I've had a chance, and have seen whether he'll do as I ask."

Some of the men were grateful for this offer; others objected to pledging themselves in any way; but Nora's influence finally prevailed; they thought her a fellow-sufferer with themselves, and, indeed, the chief sufferer of all.

She asked Bridget to get them each a glass of whisky to drink her health in, and then she told them to go home, and not to breathe a word of having seen her there. The sense of a common secret increased their feeling of common interest, and, with a little tact and patience, she managed to get rid of them all.

At last the house was clear, and the doors fastened. Then she made her way back to the library.

"They are all gone," she said, stepping into the chimney-place. "You may venture out."

He came forward, and grasped her hand with eagerness.

"Nora!—my cousin Nora!" he said.

"Don't!" was all her answer, as she withdrew her hand; and her tone was one of deep dejection.

"How splendidly you have behaved! What courage you have shown!" he exclaimed.

"Not more than my folly in coming here," she answered, with bitterness.

"But why was it foolish? and why did you hide from me? I knew you as a little girl. Why should you hate or fear me now?"

"Am I the only one?" she asked.

"Apparently not. But why does the whole district combine to detest me?"

"Have you done anything to please us?—anything except to take money and use threats? But there! it is your own affair; you must do as you like. Be as kind as you can to those poor people, for the sake of my promise to them; and accept my apologies for having intruded in your house."

"Your father's house, Nora, where I have often been a visitor."

"Where you are now master, and where I have no business to be. It was a mad thing to do, and the people I am staying with must think I am lost. I told no one where I was going, but just rode over here. Then the rain came on, and I waited until the worst was over. Then you came, and I hid; and I could not get away. First you, and then your servant, made it impossible; and when Patrick came to let me out of the house, and see me off, you followed and locked me in. And now you have found me here in your house—that is the worst of all!"

"Don't say so, Nora. I never should have found you but for your generosity in helping me

to hide. Why did you do it—why did you not let the 'boys' find me here?"

"Oh," said Nora, with a catch at her breath, "I couldn't do that."

"Why not, if you hate me so? And, Nora, if you are as poor as they seem to think, and as badly left, why didn't you let me help you, as I wished to do?"

"How could I, when you were a stranger, and never even cared to come and see me? Poverty's better than help from you. It's the same with those poor people; you have never looked at them or spoken to them, only just taken their money."

"Not much," he answered drily.

"Much or little, it's the same thing."

"And I took yours too, Nora—the inheritance that would have been yours, if you had been a boy."

"Or if my dear brother had lived," she answered, with a trembling voice; "it was his death and my loneliness that gave it to you, and turned me away."

"Poor Nora!"

"I don't want your pity."

"It's sympathy, dear, not pity," he said softly.

"Dear!" was all she replied—in a tone of deep disgust.

"Well, after all, I believe I'm the nearest relative you have; and I'm to blame for not having seen to you before rather than for wanting to do it now. And you've saved my life to-night—if appearances are to be believed—so that you can no more escape from my gratitude than I can from your hate. What would you like me to do now? To go right off and leave you here?"

"No, it would not be safe. You must wait until daylight."

"And you?"

"I will ride away with you."

"With me?"

"Yes," she answered proudly; "it is partly my fault that the people think so badly of you, and I should like to see you safe out of the district."

"You go as my protector then?"

"I suppose so."

"And why should I consent to be more indebted to you than I am already, when you have refused to owe anything at all to me?" he asked.

"This is my simple duty," she replied; and she would not be moved from her standpoint.

She had never been troubled by much control, or helped by any training; her father had petted and the servants had spoilt her. She was only an impulsive and romantic Irish girl, seizing prejudices with the aptness and holding to them with all the obstinacy of her race. But she had received a hard lesson this night, and now, as she sat in the library, with the light of a miserable candle on the table before her, and her cousin walking uneasily up and down the room, she began to look at life anew, and feel that she ought to come to decisions more carefully and rush into action less rashly than was her wont. Why should she have quarrelled with her nearest relative because he had benefited by a law which neither he nor she had made? Why should she encourage his tenants to a revolt which had nearly ended in murder, merely because he was a stranger to whom her imagination could attach all base and greedy qualities?

"I am sorry we can't be friends," he said, sud-

denly; "because you might have helped me to understand these people and do the best for them as well as myself."

"I promised them I would ask you to be kind," she said rather falteringly.

"And I *will* be kind," he said, as if coming to a sudden resolution; "for *your* sake, because *you* ask it; that is the least I can do."

"Oh, please—not for my sake."

"For whose sake then? for theirs, when they desire to kill me? For mine, to prove myself a coward?"

"Well, then, for mine if you like," she answered sighing.

"I did without their money before, and I can do without it now, until the place is more prosperous. But I wish you would help me; otherwise the leniency may do more harm than good."

There was a pause of some time, then Nora said—

"How can I help you?"

"By talking to me, making me understand their ways and their feelings; letting me come to you for advice."

She hesitated a little, sighed, and then answered—

"Well, you may come."

"Thank you," said Lance cordially. "Will you shake hands on the agreement? I feel quite a different fellow, as if I'd had a fresh start, since you have consented to take that load of enmity off me. Don't you think it would be a good idea to have some breakfast together?"

Bridget willingly prepared a simple meal, and even offered now to light the library fire; but Lance and Nora both declined the suggestion.

"There's no knowing how soon the chimney-room may be wanted again," said Lance.

However there was no return of the intruders, and the breakfast proved an exceedingly pleasant and refreshing meal. Cummings went off at day-break to the inn and sent back a horse for his master at once. Then Lance and Nora rode away together, she being certain that only thus would he be "safe."

"But, Nora, mavourneen," said Lance as he rode in high spirits beside his pretty cousin, while her flushed face and bright eyes made a lovely picture in the morning light (for she showed no paleness after her long vigil, excitement keeping the vivid colour in her cheeks), "won't your friends think it strange, dear—I mean mavourneen, that's the word those rough fellows used, so I suppose I may do the same—won't your friends think it strange of you to have paid a visit to your bachelor cousin in this impromptu fashion?"

"I suppose they will," she answered, keeping her face averted; "but I shall tell them all about it, and it isn't kind of you to remind me how strange it is."

"But," said Lance again, for he also had his share of Irish impulsiveness and youthful romance, "I was thinking, dear,—I mean mavourneen—that it would make it so much simpler if we could tell them that we were engaged."

"It would make it *worse*."

"Not if we were to be married very soon—almost directly," he observed.

"Oh! hush; you are teasing; we don't know each other."

"Who is teasing now? We have known each other all our lives."

"Not—for years—" she murmured.

"The easiest way of getting to know each other quickly would be the one I suggest," he observed modestly.

"How very strange you are!" she murmured again.

"And I am thinking of these poor people;—those very nice friends of yours with the clubs and firearms—I should get to understand them so much sooner and to help them so much better, if you fell in with my idea. Perhaps it would help them to appreciate me, too."

"Yes," she assented, "they would never hurt you then."

"You see what a capital plan it is. Why not agree to it?" he asked plausibly.

She turned away her head and murmured, "It is too soon."

"Too soon!" he repeated with a bright look of intelligence; "Ah, well, in that case, I will wait."

His waiting was not for very long; nor did the walking lady of Gaunt Castle need to wear out much more ghostly shoe-leather in her perambulation of the deserted rooms; for twelve months afterwards a Nora O'Brien was once more established as mistress of the place, and needed no spiritual substitute to occupy her old apartments; also most of the tenants had agreed to start fair and pay future rents, on condition of arrears being forgiven to them for the sake of Miss Nora mavourneen. Altogether the habitation and estate of Gaunt Castle looked out upon the world in improved condition, and with happier prospects, than when Lance first drove up to its gates.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. F. THEED.

CHAPTER X.

IN HIS OWN HANDWRITING.

I GOT a sort of shock at the sight of it. I felt, I fancy, much as the favourite of the fairies may be supposed to have felt, when he became aware, suddenly, that the one thing wanting to make his fortune, had miraculously come into his possession. There was no question of my fortune it is true; but, had that been at stake twice over, it could not have engrossed my thoughts more completely for the last few hours.

Written on a prepared printed form, and filled up even on the outside in the strong and legible, though somewhat clumsy, caligraphy which I had long known as Stephen Merritt's, I took the paper out of the drawer, handling it—for the sake of the good it would do Phillis—as tenderly as if it had been a live thing. I held it thus for a minute or two, and then I bethought me how early it must be, for there was not yet a sign of life stirring either in the house or in the farm-yard, and I put it back in its place, whilst I went to consult my watch and see how many hours I should have to wait before I could communicate my good news to her, whom it chiefly concerned. It was just four o'clock.

I was half inclined to turn out and walk off my

excitement, even at that unearthly hour; but I decided at last on going quietly back to bed, though had I been seen, I should inevitably have been laughed at for a fool for my way of doing so, with the treasure I had just found safe under my pillow! It would be Phillis', by-and-by, to do what she liked with, and put it into such safe keeping as she saw fit; but, in the meantime, sleeping or waking, I regarded it as a sacred charge, not to be trusted for one moment out of my reach.

"The Lord preserve us, Mr. Francis, but you're unco' early the morn'," exclaimed old Mattie, making her appearance with my shaving water, at an advanced stage of my toilette. "There's naught happened you the night?" and she peered curiously into my face.

I remembered a hint Phillis had let fall regarding a superstitious horror of the house which had shown itself in the old woman, since the death of its master, and was not sorry to be able to look her in the face with a laugh.

"If nothing ever happens any of us worse than what has happened me, since I came to bed last night, Mattie, we shall have small cause for sorrow," I replied cheerily. "But tell me, is Miss Phillis down?"

Miss Phillis had been up and about, this last hour, Mattie answered disdainfully. There was little good done in a house, where the mistress lay abed, and there were no hands to spare at the Willow Farm. She was not good herself for all that she had been, when I first knew her, and she was not that help to Miss Phillis she could wish to be. Besides, was not the young mistress now in the place of master and mistress both, though how long it would last who could tell?

I laughed in my sleeve as I thought of her amazement by-and-by, when she should hear from her nursing's own lips what had occurred; but mine were sealed. It seemed to me an age before I got down to the parlour, another age before Phillis, busy about her household duties, joined me there. She came in smiling, a dish of strawberries in one hand, and a great jug of cream—most deliciously suggestive—in the other.

"I am so glad," she said, "that you slept so well. Mattie told me you had had such a good night you were quite another person this morning; and indeed," turning from the table to offer me the hand the strawberries had left at liberty, "I think she is right. You are looking——"

"I am looking what I feel, Phillis," I broke in in my impatience, "ten years younger than I felt yesterday, ten years younger than I felt last night. Phillis, my dear, I have great news for you. A very strange thing has befallen me since I saw you."

She gave a sudden little gasp and sat down.

"I can guess," she said. "You have found the will!"

It is unpleasant at any time to have the words taken out of your mouth; when you think they are words calculated to make a sensation, it is doubly unpleasant; but it is most unpleasant of all, when you expect delighted enthusiasm, to be met with a sort of melancholy resignation. To look at Phillis, one would have thought I had come down to her that morning, with tidings of a calamity, rather than with the intelligence that she who had had, yesterday, nothing but doubt

and difficulty lying before her, was, henceforth, to the best of our belief, a person of independent property. To me, who had never possessed anything, since I was a very small boy indeed, which had not been the result of my own hard work, a provision of this kind seemed something to be grateful for, to say the least of it, and her way of taking it annoyed me.

"You have made a good guess," I said shortly. "I have found the will."

She had the manner of caring about it so little that as to the where and how of my finding it, I was bent upon saying nothing, until she asked me.

"Go on," she said. "Tell me about it."

She listened, paying perfect attention, but in perfect silence, whilst I explained to her. It was only when I began to do this, I remembered one difficulty that lay in my way. She had never known that her mother had left a charge with me, concerning any letter whatever. I was obliged to tell her now, and, after all, what did it matter? The letter did not exist. I had no doubt in my own mind that Merritt, having the secret of the drawer, which his wife had believed to be hers alone, had abstracted and destroyed it; and the need for it—that happily did not exist any longer either. There could be no feeling, therefore, aroused in Phillis' mind by the discovery of that last token of her dead mother's thoughtful love for her but one of gratitude. It certainly awakened in her no surprise. A pathetic little smile broke over her face as she listened, but she kept silence patiently till all was told, and then she asked me for the will. Had I brought it down with me, or was it still in its old place?

I put it in her hands, without a word.

The first thing that struck her about it was the first thing that had struck me—the writing of the superscription.

"That's father's own handwriting!" she exclaimed, with the first animation she had shown. "It was no lawyer that wrote that. Could he make it all right without one? Would it hold good?"

"Certainly it would," I answered, "properly worded and properly witnessed."

"I wonder who witnessed it," she said thoughtfully. "Would the people who witnessed it know what was in it?"

Was she going to sit there all day, I wondered, asking such childish questions as this, with the will in her hand and the breakfast cooling on the table? I answered her rather curtly. No, they need know nothing about it. Why should they? And what did she intend to do?

"I beg your pardon," she said. "I had forgotten;" and she began to pour out the tea.

I did not know what to make of her. She ought to have been so thankful and so relieved, if she felt, as I felt myself, and as I supposed she did, confident that Stephen Merritt had kept his word to her, and left her his heiress. But she showed no gratitude and no relief. Besides, what other woman in the world would have been satisfied to sit down to her breakfast, with the solution of any doubts that might be harassing her lying under her hand unopened?

She sat down to her breakfast, it is true, but it is also true that she did not eat any. Her face, always pale, was paler now than when she came in, and her eyes when she turned them on me,

after looking a long, long time out into the garden, (as if there was anything or anybody to help her out there, poor thing!) had a very troubled look in them.

"Do you know what I wish?" she said. "I wish you had never found it. I have a feeling about it I cannot explain. I would rather never have seen it."

She pushed it pettishly from her as she spoke, as if the very sight of it was, in truth, distasteful to her.

"If you were to say as much to anybody else, Phillis, knowing as much of your circumstances as I do, what do you suppose they would think of you?" I demanded gravely.

"They would think I was out of my mind. That is what you mean, I suppose. I can't help it, if you think the same. Nothing anybody thinks can alter facts, and what I said just now is the fact."

"Then give me a reason for it," I urged. "I ask no more of you than that. What are you afraid of in the will? Did your father ever lead you to suppose that he had made any conditions that would be irksome to you? that the money was to go elsewhere if you married, or anything of that kind?"

"No," she said. "He never hinted at it, and even if he had, I am never likely to marry now, and if I did—if ever I did—the money might go! We should never mind that—oh! yes, the money might go!"

Such a strange, sudden gladness as there was in her voice! Just as she had answered for him long ago, when they were both young together, so she answered for him now, with the years and the seas between them, for all she knew or could be certain of, with that flood, which is the darkest of all, dividing them. Well, God bless her! If I could not share in her confidence in the man who had gone away and left her—left her all these years, without a word or a sign to tell her whether he was still in the land of the living, and still remembered her—if I could not, I say, share in her confidence, at least I had no wish to shake it. Not that I could if I had tried. Not that I could.

"Well, then, my dear," I began. "If you would not mind about it, what should you mind about?" Your position cannot be worse than it is—"

"Suppose he has left everything he had to somebody else, to somebody who was nothing in the world to him?" she interrupted. "What then?"

"You may sit there for the next six weeks," I retorted angrily, "and suppose a thousand things. Have you the smallest foundation in the world for supposing anything of the kind?"

She shook her head.

"Very well," I said. "You have not. And even if you had? It seems to me you don't take in the situation. You don't seem to bear in mind that, no matter what we may suppose, no matter what it may or may not contain, the will is there, and we shall have to abide by it. You see, Phillis, there is no choice left us—left *you* I ought to say. The money was your father's own money, and, living or dying, he had a right to do what he liked with it."

"I know that," she returned restlessly. "But, living or dying, he could not force me to take it if I did not chose. And if I have a fancy to rob

myself, who is to prevent me? Who is there," she added suddenly, "besides you and me, who would have to see it? Mr. Needham?"

"Mr. Needham, certainly, in the beginning. Nobody else that I know of until it was proved, and, afterwards, just anybody who thought it worth a visit to Somerset House and the sum of one shilling to see."

"Then all the world might see it, if they liked?"

"Certainly, Phillis, but out of all the world is there one, do you think, who would take the trouble; and what matter to you if any one did?"

She got up and walked to the window without answering me, and there she stood, with her back to me, leaning her head on her hands. There was no sound to tell that she was crying; but presently I saw her hand steal into the pocket of her dress, and then out came her handkerchief, and I began to wish myself anywhere out of her way.

I went on with my breakfast pretending to take no notice, and by-and-by she said softly, with her face still averted, "Mr. Francis, when mother was dying, did she tell you anything about herself and father—and me?"

"Only a very little, nothing to speak of," I said, and then it was as if the words were put into my mouth, and I could not help uttering them, and putting an end at once and for ever to that mystery between us, which was destroying her confidence in me and my usefulness to her, and I told her that what her mother had not told me her mother's husband *had*, and that I had known it all this time and only loved her and pitied her the more for it.

Well, she cried very bitterly at first, as was only natural. She was proud, she said, she did not think any one knew what a proud girl she had been, and she thought she had got her death-blow when she first came to know it—then and for a long time after. Not for all the wide world would she have had George Lawrence as wise as herself—not for all the wide world would she have added to her mother's burden of sorrow the burden of infamy! It was all over now, and she could bear to look back to it and think of it and be thankful she had done what she did; but at the time it would have been easier for her to die than to do it! What she had renounced then for her mother's good name and her own good name was the life of her life, all her present happiness, all her hope of happiness to come. If she were to live to be a hundred years old, it would never be in her power to make a second sacrifice comparable to the first, and yet even that she did not regret having made. Did I quite understand her? Did I quite understand that during all these years the one assurance which had consoled her for all she had lost, was the assurance that her mother would live and die, as she *had* lived and died, in an unchallenged position; the one hope that had brightened her horizon was the hope that the lover of her youth might yet, one day in the dim future, be able to claim for his bride a woman, at whom, whatever the hardships of her life, the finger of scorn had never been pointed.

"What more natural, my dear, what more natural?"

She came up to me then, I remember, and laid her hand on the will, as if to emphasize still more what she was about to say.

"Bear that in your mind," she said. "All that I went through, and why I went through it; and then think of *him*—of the man who wrote this—of what he was in his bad moods, and how very, very often he was in them, for that last dreadful year or two, never for many hours together out of them! Think how easy it was for him to keep his word, and to leave me everything; and yet, if he had it in his heart to do it—and he *may* have had when the evil spirit was on him—how easy for him, at the same time, so to leave it me that in the leaving he should crush the life out of me with the shame and the sorrow I would have died to keep to myself. What if he has willed his money, not to Phillis Merritt—not to his daughter—but to the woman who had no right to his name—the woman who had passed as his child—whose mother—"

"Oh, Phillis, Phillis, spare yourself!" I begged of her. "Try and be calm, and try, too, to think better of *him*. A few minutes hence you may be falling humbly on your knees to ask pardon for a grievous injustice. I hope and believe that you will. And, Phillis, if I am to know how you are left, or anything else about it, there is little time to be lost, for I must be on my way, in less than an hour."

She took the paper up in a hesitating way, and asked me, a little irritably, what she was to do about opening it. I was no lawyer, but I had an idea that the seal ought not to be broken unwitnessed, and that the presence of more than one witness was desirable.

"It is all the same to me," she said somewhat sullenly, as if she thought I was forcing her into it. "We can have Mattie, if she will do. I have no secrets from her—none, nor had mother. But if it should be as I told you, I tell you fairly I shall do away with it, before any other living eye sees it."

So we had Mattie, and Phillis herself broke the seal, and I read.

It could have been worded more plainly; it could not have been simpler or more to the point. As Phillis had kept her faith with him, staying with him and putting up with him to the end, so had the dead man, in his turn, kept faith with her. He had left her all that he had, unreservedly and unconditionally, and in the few words in which he did so, he had put away from her for ever the stigma she so dreaded.

The money was formally bequeathed to his "dear and dutiful daughter."

Shall I ever forget her tears? Shall I ever forget the cry of mingled pleasure and pain, with which she turned to the old servant, to whom was known all the sorrowful secret of her life, and flung herself once again on the homely, familiar breast, on which she had many and many a time been sung to sleep.

"You were kinder than I," she sobbed forth after a while, looking up at me through eyes blinded with tears, "kinder and juster. You said I might yet be asking pardon on my knees for my hard thoughts of him, and I shall—I shall! Not to-day only, nor yet to-morrow, but all my life long—all my life!"

I was glad to hear from Phillis, after a time, that there had been no difficulty about proving the will, and that Mr. Needham was showing a very

friendly interest in her affairs, and, indeed, in her, having taken his wife and daughter over to see her. There was a little uneasiness, at first, both on her part and on that of the lawyer, with regard to Richard Merritt. They had had no word of him, and the chances seemed in favour of his never turning up; but it could not be denied that, should he be living and should the advertisement intended for him have fallen into his hands they had doomed him, most innocently, to a cruel disappointment.

(To be continued.)

MAY MORNING.

A TRUCE to dull sorrow and care!
Shall we, when all Nature is gay,
Alone of God's creatures refuse to share
I' the joy of the glad young day?

Above us the boundless blue
With never a cloud is seen;
And, sprinkled with flow'rets of many a hue,
Beneath us Earth's daintiest green.

'Tis merry in meadow and lane!
The hawthorn with blossom is gay,
And the throstle is singing its sweetest strain
To welcome the smiling May.

The cuckoo's monotonous note
Breaks now and again on the ear,
While we watch the fair lilies that lazily float,
Silver-white, on the motionless mere.

In the daisy-sprent meadows at play
The lambs appear never to tire:
Aye scattering song on his sun-litten way,
The skylark mounts higher and higher.

Over hollow andholt in their glee
The circling swallows career;
From their shadowy bower under wide-spreading
tree
Frail lady-ferns daintily peer.

Soft sunlight floods hillside and vale,
And sparkles on homestead and tower:
All Life is rejoicing to know and to hail
The Maytime's mystical power.

Even those sentinels grim,
The yews, seem to smile as they keep
Their watch by the cells, so narrow and dim,
Wherein Hope's prisoners sleep.

A truce to dull sorrow and care!
Now Nature is blithesome and gay,
Our hearts leap within us, delighting to share
I' the joy of the jocund May.

And—like the Disciples Three,
On the glistening mountain-side,
To whom it was given the Christ to see
Transfigured and glorified—

'Mid blossom and verdure and light,
Discerning God's Presence anear,
We cry, as we gaze on the marvellous sight,
"It is good for us to be here!"

JOHN F. ROLPH.

THE STORY OF A BOOK.

BY EMMA MARSHALL.

I SHOULD like to tell my story, for it seems to me that in the great multitude of companions which pour into the world every year, little ones like me are forgotten.

Every one knows what the outside of a book is—red, yellow, green, or purple in colour, lettered in silver, lettered in red, oblong and square, fat and thin. Every book has some shade of difference, which may distinguish it. It is true we come in tribes—by hundreds after one pattern—and lately the most popular cover or dress a book can wear is paper lettered with black, and the letters stretch across the cover, and are not at the back of the volume, as used to be the case.

Where do we all come from? Whither are we going? are questions which I think I may ask, without running the risk of being thought vain.

I know where I came from—that is, the heart and core of me; and I wish, as I said before, to relate my history. I must go back some way to get to the beginning of things, and that beginning takes me to a dull, dreary lodging in a dull dreary back street in London. I was born there. When the baby was asleep in the cradle, when the husband was away at his work in the Post Office, when—notice this—the last stocking was mended,—my author would get out an old case, open sundry sheets of lined paper and, with a smile on her lips, dip the pen into the ink, and let me grow under her hand.

She was very happy when she was making me the vehicle of her thoughts, pure bright thoughts they were, and whatever merit I possess came from her, who told out her thoughts on the lined paper, and made me.

She kept this work of hers a secret. Sometimes I heard her telling her baby that mother was writing a story, that perhaps, when it was published, it would make her fortune—and then—and then, oh! the joys that would come—the country home instead of furnished rooms, the flowers and the brightness, "like my old, old home, baby!"

And little by little I grew, and the old case was full, and at last I was finished. Rather, this first part of my life—my best part—was over. Then came many a journey for me. As I was born in London, from whence books are all sent out into the world, I was not committed to the post, but my dear author would tie me up neatly, and tuck me under her arm and set forth with me.

She would wait patiently to see some great pundit who was to pronounce on my merits. She was so anxious about my fate that I could feel her heart beating, as she waited with me, and even when she received me back a tear dropped upon me, and I often heard her say—

"I must give you up, my poor little book; you have no chance amongst thousands, of course not. I was so silly to think so. I will not try any more."

But she did try again, and I was received. I had been received before, but now I was unrolled and read.

When my dear author came back to hear my doom, the man who had read me laid his hand upon me and said;

"This is a nice story; it is not a novel, and yet it is full of interest. I will undertake to publish it."

"Will you pay me for it?" she asked.

"Well, no I will bring it out, and if you deposit thirty pounds, I will share the profits if it succeeds."

"I cannot, cannot pay you any money," was the answer in a low tone, "for I have none. I want money from you."

The publisher stroked his beard; he had a long beard, for it tickled me as he bent over me.

"My dear young lady, that is always the cry of young authors; but the harvest is not reaped directly the seed is sown, you must be patient."

"Give my story back to me," my author said in a trembling voice. "I cannot let you have it for nothing." I was being rolled up, and a thick elastic band clicked over me, when another voice was heard—

"Mr. Best, let me speak with you a moment." Then I was laid down on the table, and I could hear the sighs of my dear author as she sat near me.

After a few minutes, the gentleman with the beard came back, and a younger gentleman with him.

"We think, madam, we will undertake to publish this book, and—pay you ten pounds on the day of issue. The truth is my partner thinks highly of it; forgive me, more highly than I do, and by his desire I make you this offer."

So I was left on the table, then thrown into a deep drawer, from whence I was taken one morning and torn asunder.

A small part of me was sent off to the printers, being first marked by the hand of some one who read me.

Very soon after my arrival at the printer's office my fair pages were smeared with black fingers, and I was set up before a man with a pair of keen eyes, and I heard him mutter:

"Plain writing for once, that's a mercy—a woman's too." Then another voice called out:

"You are lucky, I have been puzzling over this sentence for an hour, can't make head nor tail of it;" while another grumbled:

"These proofs are so scrawled over, I'll just send them back to Mr. Best. I ain't going to spend my life over 'em."

From first to last. I heard no grumbling about myself. All went smoothly, and my dear author would smile and even sing over me as the proofs of my progress came by the post to her twice a week.

The great day came at last. After I had been punched and flattened and stitched, I was enclosed in a modest grey binding with silver letters, and was—published!

Ah me! with what crowds of other books did I make my *debut* into the wholesale publisher's warehouse, where we were all ranged on shelves waiting for orders.

Some were sent for review, some to the trade; one, with ten pounds, to my dear author.

Who of all the careless people that glanced at me guessed the labour which had been bestowed on me in my creation, and the joy which I gave when I lay complete on the breakfast-table one dark December morning? How proud was the young husband! How he took me up, and admired my shape and my binding, my silver letters and my

title! By-the-by, I have never told you my name. It was *Bright Days*.

"This is a bright day to me, darling," said the husband, hugging me and the baby and my author in one fervent embrace.

Then the ten pounds was examined—the crossed check.

"Payable to you," she said; "so you must take the money. I am only a woman, so I can't take my wage. So nice that it is yours!"

How happy they were! how full of bright plans and schemes! That ten pounds was an *El Dorado*—that check, signed by Messrs. Best and Crowe, like a banner of victory.

And now I must go to less pleasant subjects. I was not a success commercially—hardly a failure, but not a success.

Thousands passed me in the race. Books full of dark deeds—cheating, murder, and the like—sold. Books full of affected flights of æsthetic culture and lofty agnostic teaching sold; but I was passed by.

I must speak as a noun of multitude, for a certain freemasonry is established amongst us as a tribe, and we know pretty well by results what has happened.

Bright Days, the appearance of which caused such pleasure in that dull little London lodging, was lent to admiring friends and read; it was lent to others, and dismissed with faint praise.

A great critic in literature called it, goody, another dull; a third laughed over it with his clever wife, and wrote what he thought a stinging piece of satire—only a few lines. *Bright Days* was not worth more!

"Will you take another story?" my author asked of Mr. Best.

"Well, I am afraid"—and the beard was stroked thoughtfully—"I am afraid—not at our risk; we must wait. Autumn sales may affect *Bright Days*. But, to tell you the honest truth, there is not a spice of wickedness in the tale to ensure its success with novel readers, no very startling interest, no tragic incident—pray forgive my candour—and then, for the stricter folk, there is not enough said of religion. Though some call you 'goody,' others think you worldly. Your heroine goes to a dance, and once even to the theatre; and, ridiculous as it may seem, that is enough to check the circulation in some homes."

"So you think I had better never write another book?" my author said, in that sweet, low voice of hers, where well knew was the sound of repressed tears.

"I would not go so far as that. Your story is true to life—a little too true; it is well written, there are beautiful passages in it; but, to sum up in a few words, *Bright Days* is not a success."

Well, there are different notions as to success, but it seems to me that I did not altogether fail when a letter, like the one which I heard my author's husband read to her, was written about me.

It came the very next day after the interview with Messrs. Best and Crowe; it was addressed to their care, and duly forwarded. My dear author tried to read it, but the baby snatched at it, and tried to thrust the crumpled page into her mouth, and the young mother handed it to her husband, saying, "Do read it for me; I cannot imagine who wrote it."

"It is about *Bright Days*," her husband said; and I, lying on the writing-table, heard my name, and was all attention.

The letter was as follows:—

"Woodchester Manor, May 18.

"Dear Madam,

"Will you forgive me for addressing you? I am a stranger to you, or rather I *was* a stranger a week ago. Now I feel as if I had found a friend in you, and I must needs tell you so. I am a prisoner to a sofa; all manly exercises in which others of my age delight are denied to me. I have found my condition a sore trial of patience, and I know I have been a sore trial to the patience of others. A few days ago a box of books came from Mudie's. My servant unpacked the volumes as usual, and at my request read me the titles.

"At last he came to '*Bright Days*. One Volume. By CARA CAMERON. Best and Crowe.'

"The very title seemed a little inappropriate to me. I tossed the book aside, and, for a day or two, greedily devoured the novels in three volumes, which took precedence of your story, dear Madam. But at last sick with the repetition of the same incidents, tragedies, flirtations, and even worse, I took up *Bright Days*. I read it once, and read it again, more carefully. The prison doors seemed to open by its power, a new life was kindled in me by your words. Words of encouragement to endure, of spirit to take up the work God has given, not to flinch from service, even service like mine, poor and faint, the power of endurance, not gloomily not grudgingly given, but lightly and cheerfully. Your heroine lives for me. I hear her voice and see her smile. *Bright Days* indeed she makes for those about her, and in making them she makes her own. Beautiful is the influence she exercises over the most unpromising husband—the sunshine of the little home, where she faithfully fulfils her mission!

"Dear Madam, go on and prosper in your work. Doubtless you have reached many hearts, besides mine, though others may not have been so bold as I, in daring to tell you what you have done. May God reward you a hundredfold for *Bright Days* which has pierced the clouds and gloom of a self-seeking, self-engrossed life, and has made me ever, your faithful grateful friend.

"ARTHUR PIERPOINT.

"P.S.—May I hope for one word in reply, to show you are not angry with me, and to tell me that you are writing another book."

"After all then *Bright Days* was a success," the husband said, as he returned the letter. "My darling, you should laugh and be glad, not let tears fall on the poor baby; give her to me."

"Oh! they are happy tears, and to think after all, that my poor little book has *not* altogether failed. I really think I will begin again this evening when all is quiet, and I will write to my unknown friend and tell him the title of my new story shall be—*Hope Fulfilled*."

I think, in conclusion, I may venture to say that I, the book—who has here related its own history, was not, nay, is not, a failure, but rather that "Hope will be fulfilled" and that Cara Cameron will be known before long as the *successful author of Bright Days*.

PHYSICIANS' FEES.

A SHORT time ago considerable discussion arose in the public press on the subject of the remuneration of medical men, in consequence of the appearance of a paragraph in a well-known society journal to the effect that Sir Andrew Clark, M.D., the physician who is known to fame as Mr. Gladstone's medical attendant, had asked for and actually obtained the sum of five hundred pounds for a single professional visit to a patient resident in Glasgow. That this sum is a large amount to pay for a single visit from one's doctor there can be no doubt, but when we consider the reputation and social standing of the physician in question, as well as the distance to be traversed and the consequent loss of time and money in London, the demand appears to be by no means exorbitant nor without precedent. The fees paid to professional men for services rendered, both medical and legal, have often been very large in amount. Some years ago, at a time which is still fresh in the memory of the public, the eminent Mr. Serjeant Ballantine, whose interesting *Reminiscences* have been recently published, received the largest fee upon record, namely, a sum of eight thousand pounds and all expenses paid, to defend the late Gwikwar of Baroda on his trial for murder. But in order to earn that fee the lawyer had to proceed to India, and remain there several weeks. There are also upon record many other examples of the enormous fees sometimes paid to gentlemen of the long robe for forensic aid. How Sir Astley Cooper managed for so many years to pull in such an income as twenty thousand *per annum* can only be explained by the fact that probably more than the one patient recorded were in the habit of wrapping thousand pound notes in paper and throwing them at the bluff surgeon. Dr. Radcliffe, the founder of the Radcliffe Library, Oxford, and in many other ways the generous benefactor of that academic city, according to tradition, was once paid five hundred guineas for curing a noble earl of what in a humbler individual would be described as the stomach-ache. He also received one thousand guineas for attending the Duke of Gloucester through that troublesome period of his infantile existence known as "teething time." Again, it is a well-known fact that Hahnemann, the originator of the homœopathic system of medicine, made a rule of asking and (following the advice of a popular advertisement) seeing that he got it from wealthy patients, a fee of one thousand francs. From the earliest times the imperial family of the Czars has been lavish in its distribution of favours and gratuities to medical men. The magnificent fee of twelve thousand pounds sterling, as well as a pension of five hundred a year for life, which was paid to a certain English physician named Dimsdale, for proceeding to Russia that he might inoculate the Empress Catherine, may be quoted as an example. Another illustration of the liberality of Russian princes is given in the curious contract entered into and signed by both parties, on the appointment of Dr. Hermann Boerhaave as body physician to the Empress Elizabeth in 1741. The contract was of so singular a nature that it is worth reproducing here. It is headed as follows:—"Conditions upon which the Sieur Hermann Boerhaave is engaged as Court Physician of her Imperial Majesty of all the Russias," and

contains these stipulations:—"1. The said Sieur Hermann Boerhaave shall have an annual pension of 20,000 roubles, to commence on the day of his departure. 2. A house in which he shall be comfortably lodged, together with wood for firing. 3. A carriage day and night at his orders, and permission to attend patients when his presence may not be required at Court. 4. A table mid-day and evening at the Court if he thinks proper to make use of it. 5. On his departure from Holland he shall receive 6,000 roubles. 6. These articles to remain in force for four years, after which each contracting party may be at liberty to retire. 7. Sieur Boerhaave to leave for Petersburg a month after these articles have been submitted to him." After holding this lucrative appointment for six years, Dr. Boerhaave was appointed in addition archiater and chief of the medical chancery, with a salary of 7,000 roubles. He died at Moscow in 1753.

There can be no doubt that whatever grounds members of the lower ranks of the medical profession have for complaining of the smallness of the fees paid them, those who have climbed to the apex of the profession are certainly well remunerated. Few, if any, lawyers have ever made for so many years running the professional income of Sir Astley Cooper; and in no calling have unsuccessful services occasionally been so well rewarded. Thus some time ago a lady put herself under a well-known surgeon to be bled, and the operator used his lancet so clumsily that instead of a vein he opened an artery. On the lady dying a short while afterwards, and her will being read, it was found that she had bequeathed the surgeon an annuity of eight hundred pounds, conditional on his never again bleeding any one. So also a Polish Princess, who lost her life through a similar mishap, added the following kindly codicil to her will: "Convinced of the injury that my unfortunate accident will occasion to the unhappy surgeon who is the cause of my death, I bequeath to him a life annuity of two hundred ducats, secured by my estate, and forgive his mistake from my heart. I wish this may indemnify him for the discredit which my sorrowful catastrophe will bring upon him." At the present day the usual fees demanded by a physician practising in the West-end of London and of the first rank, though not a specialist—for these latter are always allowed to make their own charges—would be two guineas if the patient be seen at the physician's residence, and five guineas if at his own home. Of course these are physicians, and very capable ones too, who will attend people for less, but many physicians also would require more. The sums stated, however, represent a fair average of the fees tendered to a London physician. Only a few years ago the traditional physician's honorarium was two guineas for attendance at a patient's residence, and one guinea if he visited the physician at his own home. But with the gradual increase of prices all round, and the generally enhanced expense of living, few physicians will now be found to accept so small a fee from any but the very poorest of persons, and those they will as often as not attend gratuitously. A second visit is sometimes included, however, in the primary charge.

Turning to the other side of the Atlantic, we find that physicians in New York do not customarily

exact such heavy fees in New York as are demanded in London, and it is the general rule also with the fashionable New York physician to ask as much for a "home" consultation as he does for a visit paid to a patient at his own house. A physician of good standing expects and charges ten dollars a visit, but in cases where he knows the patient to be possessed of ample means he frequently charges a great deal more. A fee of five dollars is charged for a visit to servants. A physician who has been fortunate enough to make his mark in any particular walk of his profession is at liberty, as in this country, to charge double or indeed any amount he may choose to fix. The following illustration of the margins specialists, both in this country and America, allow themselves may be given in conclusion. The writer of the present paper had a short time since to accompany a patient professionally to the house of an eminent and titled London surgeon. Before introducing his patient he made reference to the baronet's well-known fee, with a view to some reduction. "Anything the man can afford, doctor; you know it doesn't matter to me," was the generous reply given. And in reference to the charges of another well-known specialist who practises in New York, it is customary to say: "Go to Dr. —. He will either charge nothing or else five thousand dollars for curing you."

J. G.

TATTOOING AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AN illustrated edition of man is probably not so rare a work among us as people generally imagine, while in several countries, as every one knows, it is very common. At home, however, a man is very seldom seen fully illustrated, because circumstances and prejudices are very properly against it. But now and then a case occurs which shows most unmistakably that "poor humanity" is not content with the binding and ornamentation which nature has provided, and that often embellishments are considered highly desirable. Such a circumstance was recorded a little while ago in the newspapers, a tramp having been apprehended, who, when he was searched, was found to be decorated on his skin from his shoulders to his feet in the highest style of tattoo. Birds, beasts, and fishes, national emblems, Faith, Hope, and Charity, signs and expressions of love and of loyalty, a Shakesperian quotation, and even a gravestone inscribed "To the memory of all I love," were found indelibly imprinted on him; while his gallantry—or, possibly his fickleness—was displayed in the figures of different females. The happy possessor of all these ornaments, was found by the police in a state of "elevation," and but for this "accident," the world might never have known what art he carried about with him, and by what vain sentiments he had at different times been swayed. Moreover, he must not only have taken, but also have suffered, infinite pains with his embellishments, for tattooing is a thing which the human skin rebels against, and the process requires not only patience while it is being done, but also for some days at least afterwards. Indeed, among

savage, or semi-civilized people, it is a test of physical endurance, as we shall see further on.

That the custom is very ancient, is shown by the fact that there is Scriptural reference to it, a passage in Leviticus prohibiting it to the Jews, who were told, "ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you." The ancient Britons not only painted their skin, but also tattooed it, and the practice seems to have lingered in England till after the Norman conquest. It abides with us still, but as a rule (so far at least as is known) only among sailors, who, however, generally content themselves with the device of an anchor, a couple of crossed flags, or some such partial illustration of their brawny hands or arms. This they do by piercing the skin with a needle, and injecting Indian ink into the little punctures. When the pattern is a large one, the straight lines are made with a number of needle points fixed in a piece of wood, the curves having to be done with a single point. Prior to the discovery of the illustrated tramp above referred to, the most illustrious and latest example among us was King Tawhio, who came over here to get some Maori wrongs righted.

It is among the New Zealanders indeed, that tattooing has perhaps its fullest development, as may be seen in our museums. At one time, it was a common practice for captains of ships when visiting New Zealand to purchase heads and bring them home, but missionary enterprise, and the advances of civilization generally, have interfered very materially with this questionable traffic, which not unfrequently gave rise to feuds among the natives, whose cupidity was not proof against the "good thing" which might be made out of the head of a brother-native when it was wanted for export. The Marquesans also largely adopt the practice of tattooing, and so do other natives of the islands in the Pacific Ocean. In treating of the subject with more particular reference to the people just named, Dr. Robert Brown, who has gathered into popular form a great deal of interesting information with regard to the different races of mankind with which the earth is populated, says that, though the majority affect tattoo simply as a personal ornament, there are some grounds for believing that in a few cases it may be looked upon as a badge of mourning or a memento of a departed friend. Like everything else in Polynesia, its origin is related in a legend, which credits its invention to the gods, and that it was first practised by the children of Taaroa, their principal deity. The sons of Taaroa and Apouvaru were the gods of tattooing, and their images were kept in the temples of those who practised the art as a profession, and to them petitions are offered, that the figures might be handsome, attract attention, and otherwise accomplish the ends for which they submitted themselves to the operation. The colouring matter was the charcoal of the candle-nut mixed with oil, and a fish-bone needle was used, a thread being drawn through the skin, the black colouring matter being injected with instruments made for the purpose. To show any signs of suffering under the operation is looked upon as disgraceful, and accordingly, in some of the islands, while the operation is going on, the young man undergoing it will lay his head upon the lap of his sister, or of some young relation,

while a number of female friends will keep up a song, so as to drown the murmuring which the torture may draw from him inadvertently, and that therefore he may not be demeaned in the eyes of his countrymen who are present as spectators. The tattooing of the Marquesans and New Zealanders is the most artistic; that of the Sandwich and Pulliser Isles the rudest of all. The designs are often very intricate, but they vary immensely. Sometimes figures of animals, plants, and natural objects are tattooed. A cocoonut is a favourite object. In this connection, the author above-named quotes Mr. Ellis, who says that he has often seen a cocoa-nut tree correctly and distinctly drawn, its root spreading at the heel, its elastic stalk pencilled as it were along the tendon, and its waving plume gracefully spread out in the broad part of the calf. Sometimes a couple of stems would be twined up from the heel, and divided in the calf, each bearing a plume of leaves. The sides of the legs are sometimes tattooed from the ankle upwards, which gives the appearance of wearing pantaloons with ornamented seams. The females used the tattoo more sparingly than the men, and with greater taste. It was always the custom of the natives to go barefooted, and the feet, to an inch above the ankles of the chief women were often neatly tattooed, appearing as if they wore a loose sandal or an elegant open-worked boot. The females seldom, if ever, marked their faces; the figures on their feet and hands were all the ornaments they exhibited. Many suffered much from the pain occasioned by the operation, and from the swelling and inflammation that followed, which often continued for a long time, and ultimately proved fatal. This, however, seldom deterred others from attempting to secure the badge of distinction or embellishment of person.

We are further informed that in the South Sea Islands the tattooing is in dotted lines, while in New Zealand the lines are continuous, and are made in the most painful manner. In the last named country the most complicated patterns are found upon chiefs of the highest order, and their peculiar devices form distinctions which, in some cases, take the place of the sign manual of the individual to whom they belong. There is an instance in which a chief making a grant of land to some missionaries had a drawing of the tattoo of his face affixed in lieu of signature, while an attesting witness added a copy of the pattern upon one of his cheeks. In Samoa tattooing is still practised to some extent, as it is considered a mark of respectability and decent birth; but as a very recent writer has observed, the people now are chiefly dressed in Manchester print and Bradford cloth.

It is said that the ladies of Hawaii tattoo the tips of their tongues in memory of departed friends. If this be so, the lost ones would not be likely to have much said against them at any rate for a considerable time, for a tattooed tongue must be rather awkward to wag. But this advantage is perhaps a rather ungallant and unfeeling one, especially if in Hawaii the proverb *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is known.

Among other peoples, the Hindoos practise tattooing to some extent, women painting various figures, chiefly of flowers, on the arms, chin, and cheeks of their daughters. In Burma too, as a

correspondent of the *Times* has very recently pointed out, tattooing the body from the waist to the knees prevails to such an extent among the male population that it may almost be said to be universal with them. The operation there is extremely painful, and in most cases it is executed by instalments; but some, with stronger nerves, or by the aid of opium, have it all done at one time. The absence of tattoo marks is regarded as not very creditable, and those without them are disposed to wear their dress in such a way that the fact shall not be too evident. The women of Abyssinia also sometimes adorn themselves, generally on the upper joint of the arm.

Occasionally tattooing has been inflicted as a punishment, and a conspicuous instance of this was recorded some little time ago. The captain of a vessel, who had for his companions an American and a Spaniard, was in Chinese Tartary, following the occupation of mining. Among the community who were similarly engaged there arose a rebellion—a not uncommon thing. The captain and his two companions sided with the malcontents, and got the worst of it. The three were taken prisoners, and they had the option of being tattooed for three months or of losing their heads. They chose the former, though it turned out that the torture inflicted upon them caused them to “lose their heads” in another sense. When the operation was completed the captain found himself “illustrated,” partly in blue and partly in red, in a way that would have made even the tramp above-described envious. He had, indeed, nearly three hundred little pictures pricked into him—all sorts of animals, leaves, flowers, fruits, and other devices. No part of his body except his ears and the soles of his feet was left without an illustration; and it may well be imagined that he made a capital show for Mr. Barnum, as apart from his extraordinary decorations, he had a striking appearance, being nearly six feet high, and had jet black glossy hair; while his knowledge of languages enabled him to hold his own in almost any society. His head and chest were so completely covered with figures that he appeared to be clothed with some woven material of fantastic make. Even between his fingers there were little figures. Much as he must have suffered he was more fortunate ultimately than his two companions, both of whom died some time afterwards, previous to which one—the Spaniard—lost the sight of both eyes.

C. H.

OUR WORLD.

BY HARRIET KENDALL

HOW often in the rose-light of the halcyon days of summer
We have trod the world together—the fair world
we made our own,
With the glory of that dreamful time—our June
of love around us,
And the beauty and the softness of the flowers
about us strown.

What wonder we were happy when the present
was so glowing,
And the future too—for aught we knew—would
be as bright and blue;

But the things we deem the fairest and the nearest
to our longings
Seem to pass, just when we love them, and to
vanish from our view.

And memory takes me back into the rustic-seated
arbour
Where the wild syringa reared aloft each perfume-laden spray,
Where the hours sped by unnoted, save by tiny-throated warblers
Which, awearied of their trilling, sought their nest at close of day.

A dream of odour floated from the woodbine as it clambered,
And anon and then a lisping came from brook-lets in the wold;
And it seemed as if the silences were full of angels' singing,
As our thoughts were strung together by a slender thread of gold.

And gazing as the sunlight plays with roses in the heavens,
And the grandeur of the stillness awes my spirit as I stand,
I can think that all the freshness of my young life has not left me,
For I hear the soft word spoken, and I clasp the warm strong hand.

But when the trembling starlets gem the reach of solemn azure,
And the moonlight gilds the chesnuts near the homestead where we met,
Oh, I wonder if I dreamt it when I thought my star had risen,
Or I wonder if I'm dreaming when I think my star has set?

'Tis all so vague and shadowy the present and the future,
And the past looks half unreal in the tender, silver night,
And I cannot clasp the vision as it quickly glides afore me,
Tho' I stretch my hand out, yearning for the brightness and the light.

And I seem once more to mingle with the gladness of the old world,
As I stand, bewildered, gazing on the glistening meadow-land,
While the varying shadows tamper with the heather till it purples,
And I know the tale is finished, but I cannot understand.

I have a secret hope that in the years which stretch to heaven
I shall rend the veil which separates the joyance from the pain,
For I used sometimes to fancy that our world was where the stars are,
And I think that I shall know it when I meet it there again.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monksholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER V.

"I THINK THAT WAY WOULD DO."

IT was growing dusk when he came back. She was lying on a couch with her eyes closed; the uneaten dinner had been taken away.

The landlady spoke to him as he went in. The lady seemed very ill, she remarked, she would eat nothing at all. Did she faint sometimes? She seemed almost like that when they went in to take the meal away, but they had got her to swallow some wine. She seemed almost a child, and so delicate. Did she need a doctor? Shouldn't she have a maid to nurse her and look after her? It was a sad pity that there were no English in the place, so that they could speak to her, poor thing! How did she come to be travelling alone?

Henry Dilworth explained that her friends had been drowned in the wreck; he did not know about the maid, she wouldn't be of much use if she couldn't speak English; he would ask the lady herself; and then he went in to Agnes, shutting the door behind him. Would not he himself, he thought, be kinder and more efficient than any hired nurse, if she would give him the right?

She opened her eyes as he came in; and he saw that there were tears on the lashes. One arm was thrown back under her head, which rested uneasily upon it.

"You don't look comfortable," Henry Dilworth said, "let me raise the cushion," and he went forward and readjusted it.

"How much better you make it!" she said, with a faint smile, as her head nestled against it, and her eyes rested mournfully, almost reproachfully, upon him.

"Yet I am very clumsy, and not used to touching things that want delicate hands about them. Don't you find that out? Don't you feel it?"

"You always seem able to do the things you want to do," she answered. "When you want to make me comfortable and easy you can."

"But I don't always want?"

"I—suppose not."

"Very well; you shall please yourself. If you like my care—if it seems to you sufficient——" and then he paused.

It seemed to him that in his desire to discover her need, irrespective of his own wishes, he was putting the thing brutally. He did not want to persuade her against her own will, nor even indirectly to bring his influence to bear on her decision; he wanted her to act on the impulse of her own feelings, to take the course towards which her mind instinctively turned in this time of need; but it was not necessary to frighten and repel her by his abruptness.

He did not feel called upon to speak to her of her friends and their probable wishes, nor yet of the difference in habits and circumstances which would have divided him from her in ordi-

nary times. These he knew, or could guess at; but the crisis of her fate seemed to carry her beyond their influence now. The question for settlement at the moment appeared to be a simple one, and its answer depended entirely on her own feelings; there was no need then to perplex her with extraneous considerations which were no longer weighty enough to carry decision. He must try to understand what she thought and wished; if she seemed satisfied with the proposition he was about to make, her best chance of life and happiness would rest in his hands, and he would make the most of it for her. If, on the other hand, she shrank from the idea and was horrified—as seemed to him very possible—their separation would be an easy and simple matter at once; she would make no more protest against it.

He began again more gently:

"You do not like to go to England alone?"

"I am afraid," she repeated; "it is a long way. I know no one. I am not used to being alone."

"I should like to go with you, to take care of you, to look after you, better a great deal than I have done so far. I should like to take you back to your friends well and happy."

She raised herself eagerly on her elbow and looked at him.

"Then, why can't you? Is it business?—that dreadful thing that gentlemen always talk about when they won't do the things you want. But they can make it give way, can't they, when they want to do the things themselves?"

"Is that it?" he asked with a little smile. "Perhaps it is. Then I want to go to England with you very much, and can make the business wait. I should like you to be my first business, my best interest—you are that last already—but there is only one way, and you would not like it."

"How? I? Why not?"

He was growing more excited every moment. He watched her with eagerness, trying to take in all the indications she gave in her unconsciousness.

"There is one way—if you will go as my wife."

"Oh!" She leaned back on the couch and looked at him with a sudden wonder.

"If you are angry and wish me to leave you," he said gently, "I will go away without another word."

"No! Wait."

She leaned back, looking at him with a continued wonder, modified by a growing eagerness, as of awakened expectation. He had watched her keenly, but he had perceived no shrinking movement, nothing that signified instinctive reluctance to this strange idea, however much she might have been taken by surprise.

"I didn't know—I never thought of that," she murmured breathlessly.

"I know you didn't; but it seems to me the only way."

"And you would take me to England?"

"I would take you wherever you wished."

"Then, in that way you would take care of me always?" she went on, as if speaking to herself.

"If it would satisfy you."

"And you—would you like it?" she asked with a quick flush and glance at him, as if a new light dawned upon her.

He put his hand on hers, clasping it closely. He had not touched her before, and now it amazed her to feel how his fingers trembled—those fingers which had been steady and strong to help her in time of need.

She looked into his eyes, which met hers with tender assurance of a love and kindness beyond her understanding; and what she saw satisfied her.

"I think," she said softly, "that way would do."

So, with clasped hands, but without any kiss, the contract between them was sealed.

CHAPTER VI.

ALONE TOGETHER.

IN the necessary interval which elapsed between this sudden betrothal and the strange marriage following it, Henry Dilworth did not act the part of an ideal lover in romance; he did not even fill the position so completely as Jack Longford had done. But Agnes liked him all the better for this. She was never startled into a perception of the newness of her situation, its difference from any in which she had ever been before. Compliments were as absent as caresses from his intercourse with her. He gave abundant proofs of thoughtful care, but of passionate eagerness none. It was true that he arranged for the marriage to take place at the earliest time possible. "If it is to be, the sooner the better," was a somewhat enigmatical remark which he made on the point. But she accepted in perfect faith every arrangement which he declared to be good, instinctively feeling that her interest was considered in all he did, more than his own. With her sensitive nature, shrinking from slight or indifference, demanding always more than it gave, she would have detected the first hidden touch of selfishness in his conduct. She was safer than, in her simple confidence, she seemed to be; a false note in his kindness, too much flattery, too little consideration, would have shocked her at once. It would not have been easy to deceive her with an apparent generosity; her own selfishness, sweetly hidden as it was from herself and all the world under her gentleness and timidity, was the touchstone with which she tested others, and by which she knew Henry Dilworth to be altogether good and true.

He asked her for no assurance of love; perhaps he hardly conceived that she could give to him a stronger feeling than that of clinging confidence, and of that confidence he was receiving the most perfect proof. He felt that for her this marriage was only a desperate remedy, adopted in the absence of all others. Until it was actually over he would leave her memory as free as he would have left her heart; so that if, at the last moment, he could have given her back to her friends as Agnes Leake, and she had chosen to be so given, her part with him would not have left even the recollection of a kiss, as a claim or a taint on her future.

Agnes was content with this novel sort of betrothal, and the marriage which followed so

quickly came to her in the way best suited to her nature; it was the sealing of a bond already involuntarily made, the rectification of an intimacy which had become the principal need of her life.

In ordinary circumstances she would probably have passed from girlhood to womanhood without feeling her heart touched by any one outside her family circle; she might have married, as an after-thought, when her first youth was over, and the old ties were thinning around her; but home attachments were the most natural to her—those which had existed from childhood, and never known a beginning, nor needed any ceremonial confirmation. So long as these subsisted uninjured she had felt no attraction in attachments that were new and startling. Now, however, she was alone, her family far away, and for some months past Henry Dilworth had been the best substitute she could find for brothers and sisters. It would have been strange to part with him at this moment; it was much less strange to agree to his proposition and become his wife.

The whole affair was very quiet and unexciting. When indeed Henry Dilworth took his wife into his arms for the first time and kissed her, knowing that she was actually his own, she was a little surprised at the passionate tenderness which he showed for the first time; but she only flushed and smiled, and was pleased to think that he loved her so much, for that would make it all nice and easy in the future. He would never be unkind, never seem indifferent, never do the things she did not wish, after the fashion of some husbands that she knew.

She was so bright and happy in the renewed consciousness of "belonging" to somebody, of being no more a solitary wanderer on the face of the earth, that Henry Dilworth marvelled as much as he rejoiced at the success of his experiment. She was a mixture of qualities strange to his experience, now that they unfolded themselves, like shut flowers after rain expanding in the sunshine of hope. She was so exacting and yet so obedient, so tender and yet—but this he never said to himself or any other—so selfish.

One of the first things which she did after her marriage was to give back to Henry Dilworth the money which he had made her take that first evening on shore.

"Now you will pay for everything," she said triumphantly, "I needn't be afraid of losing my purse any more."

This action was significant of her theory of life; to casual observers it would have seemed a beautiful example of disinterested confidence; but its meaning was not so simple as this. The partnership into which she entered signified, from her point of view, an abandonment of all difficult things in life to her husband's care: therefore it was that she began at once to hand over everything troublesome to him, including even money. She would have the things that money could buy, but not the responsibility of paying for them. She understood indeed that she must demand within certain limits, but those limits did not exclude the sacrifice of his comfort and inclination to hers. She had married him in order to secure for her own benefit his generous qualities and capable service, and both husband and wife acted upon this foundation as distinctly as if it had been stated in the Marriage Service, though

both of them would have refused with indignation to acknowledge it.

Agnes felt her new rights strongly and pleasantly from the very beginning. On the afternoon of her wedding-day she begged to be taken for a drive, and she looked at the world with re-assured eyes as she sat beside her husband, confident that her weakness and timidity were no longer of any consequence, since his strength and courage were sealed to her service.

His devotion to her wishes at this moment, his intense sympathy, his close attention to all her wants, made her feel how much his kindest kindness had hitherto failed to supply the demands of her nature. Confidential intimacy with some one who belonged to her was essential to her peace of mind; therefore the disappearance of all reserve affected her mood as sunshine affects the wings of a butterfly: she was impelled to happy movement and joyous life. Her new experience was all the more agreeable to her, because her husband was not—except in that first moment—passionately demonstrative in his affection; she was used to continual tenderness, but to no superabundance of caresses; and now she was quite happy and at rest in Henry Dilworth's company.

When she came back from her drive, tired but not out of spirits, and lay down on the couch to rest, he sat beside her and put his arm under her head, and so she fell asleep like a weary child, the fretfulness gone out of her look; for she seemed to have put away again the cares of life, to feel satisfied that he would take her home and do all she wanted, without ever troubling to ask how or when.

As he watched her then, he was at last carried away by thoughts and hopes for himself. Her happiness was his own, and to think of her life was to think of his. Her sweetness and tender confidence seemed to him very beautiful—things beyond his right to possess, but which could not fail to idealize his life and make it a higher thing than he had ever dreamt of. His past, as he looked back upon it, seemed prosaic in comparison with the present; it had unfolded only the possibilities of his own nature; now that nature would be enlarged and ennobled by contact with one of a finer type. It seemed to him that he could not fail to lead a better life because Agnes loved him.

And he thought at that moment that it was altogether in his power to make her happy. She had brought forward no claim so far which he had not been able instantly to satisfy; and he could not imagine that any mere difference of station, anything in past education or old habits, could be sufficiently important to divide them now. His love satisfied her here: it did not occur to him that it might fail to do so in the home he would make for her. So far she missed nothing, felt no want in his company; and his hopes seemed justified as the days went on, for her happy sense of rest in his care increased rather than diminished.

They did not leave for England by the next vessel which sailed; the accommodation was not very satisfactory on board this particular ship, and Henry Dilworth thought the rest on shore was doing his wife good under the present happier conditions. She would be all the stronger for the voyage after waiting a little. She had ceased

to show impatience for that home which she now felt confident of reaching; she was well enough to amuse herself by a little sight-seeing, and she spent a good deal of Henry Dilworth's money without seeming to be aware of it.

He was glad to think that he could afford to be somewhat lavish on her behalf; it seemed to him as natural to spend money for her as to leave it unspent himself. Whatever, therefore, he did in the company of his wife, was done in the most comfortable and even luxurious manner. Her health demanded it, her habits led her to expect it. But when he was alone he returned to his old ways, and it made Agnes open her eyes with astonishment to discover how economical he was on his own behalf.

"But *why* should you do so?" she asked; for she had happily concluded—as she concluded many things which it was pleasant to believe in the absence of evidence—that he was not short of money; and he had fortunately no reason to interfere with her conclusion.

"Why should I do differently when I am alone?" he replied. "This is the way I am used to."

This answer perplexed her a little.

"Perhaps it wouldn't matter if I didn't know," she said meditatively: "but I don't like to think of it; and then"—adding this as a happy thought—"other people don't do it."

"What other people? More people do my way than yours, dear child; for more people are poor than rich."

"But it's because they can't help it; they change as soon as ever they can. And even if you *used* to do it, that's no reason why you should go on now. People always make a great difference when they marry! That's why it costs so much. They spend a great deal more money than they did before—even on themselves."

"Do they, indeed?" he answered with a smile of some amusement, such as that with which we listen to a child's pretty prattle on subjects beyond its understanding. "What wonderful things in social economy you will teach me in time!"

There was another thing on which she commented with some doubtfulness, and that was her husband's letter to her sister Susie. They both wrote to England by that vessel in which they did not sail, sending news of the safety of Agnes and of her marriage.

Henry Dilworth's letter was not, however, wholly satisfactory to his wife. She looked at the letter and then at him, with an odd expression of perplexity.

"They won't know what you're like when they read it," she said; "you are not like *that*." But she did not specify what "that" might mean.

"I've said all that's necessary, I think," he answered: "your letter tells the rest."

"Oh yes, it's all right," she said slowly.

Then she smiled in his face, and observed, "They will be sure to know that I shouldn't have married you if you hadn't been *nice*."

CHAPTER VII. THOSE AT HOME.

VERY reluctantly had Miss Leake and her sisters given up all hope of seeing Agnes again, and

hearing of the safety of Kate. It was only when the ship *Swan* had been reported missing for several months that the household at the Stepping Stones changed those sober colours, which they had worn during the period of doubt and anxiety, for a dress of actual mourning.

This unexpected calamity was a terrible blow to Miss Leake: her outlook in life seemed to be suddenly taken from her; she had nothing farther to arrange or to plan. The small domestic circle from which she sent out her forces into the social world lost its reason for existing, and her own position, in the background though it had always been, was now deprived of its reality.

What she suffered during that time no one knew, for she carried a brave face before her little world, and spoke to her clergyman of resignation, and of chastening afflictions. Nevertheless it perplexed her that she should have been thus chosen as a subject for this sort of "dispensation." Had she not done her duty? was she not herself no despicable servant? and had she not carefully brought up her younger sisters as a credit both to society and religion? It was well for those households who stumbled stupidly on in a confusion of morals and a negligence of manners to be thus occasionally humiliated; but for her household, so decorous, so orderly, so dutiful, to be thus devastated, was a thing beyond her comprehension. She was capable of arguing with Providence, after a manner not unknown to the ancient heroes of the Jews, and of asking if Divine justice was not held up to contempt by her own unmerited chastisement, if the enemies of the good might not reasonably triumph at this undoing of all her plans. But the simplicity of the patriarchal time has long passed away; courage and conceit have adopted modified forms since Jacob made his imperious bargains, and David argumentatively put forward his own merits for his Creator's notice.

"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" was the text with which Miss Leake faced the world; but secretly she felt that, if this were love, she was just as well without it. Her sister Ellen ventured to suggest that perhaps they had been worldly, and this was a punishment; but Miss Leake scoffed at the idea, as insulting to Divine intelligence. She had done her duty and taken care of her family—no more than that; and if she had been mistaken, must her young sisters be sacrificed for her fault? Her sorrow was tinged with bitterness, but with no humility or regret; she looked merely with a little tinge of concealed contempt upon her clergyman as an official of a system which neglected its duties and abandoned its servants in a manner calculated to bring disgrace on any worldly and fallible one! "They have been taken perhaps from the evil to come," the vicar remarked, using the comforting formula which had been provided for him to bring forward on such occasions; and Miss Leake answered, with grim politeness, "Very true."

They had been taken from a world where the higher powers broke their contracts as freely as the lower, and religion was a thing as shifting and uncertain as commerce. So she interpreted his comforting observation. Providence, she felt, was unreliable and constantly needing special explanation after the event; the survivors in a catastrophe generally extolled the wisdom of its selections, and the others could say nothing; but

she, a sufferer on this occasion, perceived no wisdom and no design in its management. The trouble which had fallen upon her seemed to her the result of carelessness or indifference: she had a feeling as if some one had broken faith with her; but she was too proud, rather than too timid, to say so.

It was perhaps with renewed anguish and indignation that she read in a morning paper the startling announcement of the survival and rescue of some of the crew of the lost ship, and of two passengers, "Mr. and Mrs. Dilworth." Had any woman been saved, and not her sister? This was a hard and bitter thing indeed. Ellen was, on the other hand, softened and saddened. It was "mysterious," she pronounced, "wonderful;" and the more she failed to understand the Divine intentions, the more reverentially she endeavoured to conciliate them. If religion was not that institution for the encouragement of respectable families, and Providence that power delegated for their protection, which they appeared to her sister Susie to be, there was all the more reason to study their special requirements: frequent attendance at early services, careful fulfilment of ordinances and carrying out of genuflections, might after all be the true road to divine favour.

The life of a courtier, who neglects essential service for ceremonial observances, may be followed also as a religious career, and Ellen began to devote herself to it.

But one morning, not long after that announcement had been seen in the newspapers, there lay on the breakfast table at The Stepping Stones a letter in a handwriting which Miss Leake had despaired of ever seeing again.

She looked at it as if it might be a messenger from another world, and she could hardly find courage to open it. She broke the cover at last, and turned at once to the signature. It was in the same well-known handwriting, and she read there—

"Your loving sister,
"AGNES DILWORTH."

The light of a reasonable hope began to grow in her mind, to flush her pale cheeks, and to tremble in her hands. She looked at the date and at the writing, at the enclosure in another handwriting, signed "Henry Dilworth," and she began to understand. For was not Dilworth the name of the passengers who had been announced as saved?

"Anna! Ellen!" she said, speaking to her sisters, "Agnes is alive; this is her letter." And when once she had said it, it became a real thing to her; she turned greedily back to the precious paper in her hand for further explanations.

(To be continued.)

A SONG OF CONTENT.

THE eagle nestles near the sun :
The dove's low nest for me !
The eagle's on the crag : sweet one,
The dove's in our green tree.
For hearts that beat like thine and mine
Heaven blesses humble earth ;
The angels of our Heaven shall shine
The angels of our Hearth !

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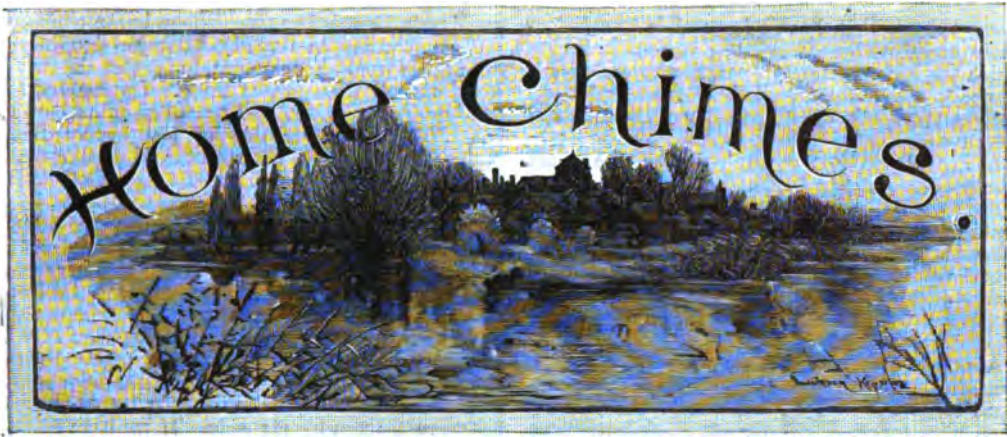
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

IN THE WINTER TWILIGHT.

BY "VINDEK."

I.

IT was November. An unmistakably miserable winter day, when the heavens and the earth both donned a sombre, faded garb, and a depressing half-rain, half-mist seemed to have constituted itself tenant-at-will of the atmospheric regions. What little daylight had illumined the earlier post-meridian hours was fast dying away, and the wind was rising in fitful gusts, showing an inclination to excite the drizzling moisture into a more energetic downpour, as a young girl turned her back on the last dilapidated house on the outskirts of Ardrone. She walked quickly along the damp path, and when, after half a mile, she had to face a road whose surface presented the pleasing alternatives of mud-pools and water-lochs, she stepped resolutely into their uninviting depths, and continued her way without swerving from a straight line for at least another mile. Turning suddenly to the left, she found firm if difficult footing on the loose stones of a newly-macadamised by-way.

Hitherto leafless hedgerows and moss-covered earthen banks had guided her on either side, but now two glaring lines of light limestone and fresh mortar wound with many a curve through fields, which even still retained something of their spring verdure. Here and there a little tree-crowned knoll lent variety to the scene. On one side a ruined keep just peeped over a thick brushwood on the summit of a gently-sloping hill looking down on the almost obliterated traces of a homestead of which was left not a stone upon a stone.

Dimly visible were the lines which marked where once had stood a prosperous dwelling-house, with barns and stables, and the many division offices of a farmer's little kingdom. Fat woolly sheep stretched themselves across the

threshold and grazed contentedly on the hearth; while the stones which had once sheltered generations of hard-working men and women, and had echoed their laughter and sobs, helped to fill in that specimen of modern mason-craft which protected the wool-grower's property.

Scarcely a glance did the girl give at the eviction scene. Wind and rain swept across her path in fitful, violent gusts, but a fixed purpose rendered her impervious to external influences. It was only when she reached a bridge spanning the Ardrone river, and paused to find herself the solitary human figure in that dismal winter landscape, that a sense of her position dawned on her. Resting her hands on the wet parapet of the bridge, she strained her eyes to discern a figure approaching from the dim distance where the shadow of a town seemed dissolving in the grey rain-clouds. Nor man nor beast was visible as far as eye could reach; not even a bird stirred abroad, and the only sound that ear could catch was the splash of rain-drops in the river. Suddenly the wind got round her umbrella, and a quick twirl to save it from destruction seemed to infuse animation into her thoughts.

"He will never believe I ventured out such an evening; I ought to hurry home before the storm rises. Still, he would not disappoint; perhaps he has come and gone. It must be long after four o'clock."

Thus she reasoned, walking up and down the bridge, and a fitful remorse seized her as she remembered what a delicate chest this knight-errant suffered from, and how it was her bidding which brought him across the sodden fields in such unhealthy weather. Somehow she felt confident that he would not fail, and continued her solitary promenade, too busy in thought to heed the passing minutes.

"I wonder will he wear an overcoat and bring an umbrella? And what am I going to say to him?"

This last consideration soon banished every other. What was she going to say to him? So

many things, that it was impossible to satisfactorily arrange and docket the various branches which she wished their conversation to embrace—branches which should all bear fruit from one seed—a straightforward discussion of their mutual intentions.

A delicate subject enough under the most favourable circumstances, and one which becomes painful when distinction of class helps to embitter the barrier which a total want of worldly wealth raises between two youthful souls.

She returned to the parapet to make another survey just as the object of her reflections was preparing to climb the wall from the other side.

A moment more, and they were face to face, hand in hand, all the perplexities of common-sense forgotten in the fulfilment of their desire. They were together, safe for one whole hour from the prying eyes, the spiteful tongues of friendly gossips.

"I am afraid you will catch cold," was his prosaic remark as he walked beside her; and she echoed his words, laying her hand on his shoulder and sleeve, and asking why he had come out without an umbrella?

"It would only be a useless burden, and delay me on the way, and I started late. My father wanted some letters written, and I could not disappoint him."

They were singularly undemonstrative, this youth and maiden, who, with their hearts full of contentment and a hundred fond speculations thronging their minds, could find utterance only for the most commonplace remarks. Could a third person have witnessed their greeting, and marked the half-diffident, half-awkward restraint which kept them slightly apart, his hands buried in his overcoat pockets, hers holding aloft an umbrella in constant resistance to the elements, they would have found it difficult to believe how much those two had risked to meet—what a subtle, powerful attraction drew them momentarily together in spite of a hopeless certainty that widely apart through the world's wilderness stretched a lonely, darkened path for each.

"Kieran!" The low, tremulous voice, the soft love-light in the eyes which sought his, completely scattered the young man's commonplaces. In a moment he had taken possession of the umbrella and drawn her hand through his arm.

"What a pair of madcaps we are!" the girl said laughing. "There is one advantage in this sort of weather, not even one's very particular friends' curiosity would induce them to risk getting the contents of the clouds."

"I hope you will not suffer for it. Such a road as you selected, not an inch of shelter in any direction." He drew her still closer as a storm-blast came shrieking and whistling down the hillside, shaking the very tree-trunks in its fury. "What a courageous little woman you are."

"I want some redeeming virtue. People say all sorts of things about us, and I know you hate to be chaffed about girls. I wish I did not bring so much trouble on your shoulders."

"Oh, I've become hardened to quizzing. I can laugh when they try to joke me now. I wanted to tell you a report that you and I are going to be married. I was afraid you might think that it got out through any fault of mine. The other

evening in Egan's bar some fellows began chaffing me about going in for Mrs. Barry's daughter, hoping we would have a grand night at the wedding, and all that sort of thing. I pretended to join in the laughter, and passed it off as best I could. My shoulders do not feel such trifles, Nellie; but I would not wish for all my life that any of your friends heard it. I dread the trouble it would bring on you."

Nellie's looks were very grave, she made a few steps in silence, then withdrawing her hand from his arm, she stood earnestly gazing into his face. Not a fleeting shadow in the grey eyes, not a line around the delicate mouth, not a change in the mobile features escaped her while she spoke. "I can never blame you whatever happens. From the beginning it was I who made the advances. Whenever chance threw us together I exerted myself to retain you by my side. If we have sometimes walked together, it was I who said to you 'come.' From the first you took care to inform me of your circumstances; you frequently impressed on me that in a lifetime you do not expect to possess an unbroken five-pound note. The future you say is an utter blank for us, I have no alternative but to agree with you. I only regret that I should have made you discontented with your home surroundings."

With his disengaged hand he drew her towards him, and putting his arm around her, begged in low, shaken tones that she would not speak so. "God knows you are the only girl I ever gave a thought to. If I could put you in a carriage you know I would, and if you were a thousand miles away and I did not see you for years, it would make no change in my affection; but—I am sure I shall never be anything more than I am to-day. Where's the use of trying. I have no means of making money in this country, and if I went to America my father might shut the door on himself and that houseful of children."

Nellie's heart was full of bitter rebellion. A half scornful smile banished all tenderness from the face which drooped wearily on Kieran's shoulder. "Your father is still an active, healthy man, quite competent to look after his own affairs, and your brothers are all old enough to help him, why should he not allow you to make a way for yourself in the world?"

"Ah, you do not understand——"

"I understand perfectly that you wish to have money without the trouble of making it; that you prefer keeping up a certain appearance before your Ardrone friends, to undertaking the more laborious task of working for an independence; I believe, too, that had you a house ready furnished and an annuity you would be glad if I would share both, but in the meantime you would not sacrifice one evening's amusement, you would not trouble to change one indolent every-day custom that such things should come to pass. As long as you possess a pipe and tobacco and some loose silver to pass currency in bar and billiard-room, you will never fret very much after the nobler aims of life."

The young man's arm trembled, and a pained perplexity deepened the shadow of his long lashes. "You are very astute, Nellie, but I am not quite the selfish being you imagine. I am thinking more of you than of myself. I would do anything for you, give you anything; but I cannot

change my nature, and I have always been satisfied to let every day do for itself."

"Do you ever try to fancy what the future will be like?"

"Often! I lie awake whole nights wondering what you will be like, where you will be."

What she would be like, where she would be—then in his dreams of the future they evidently occupied different pictures, with a pang her woman heart realized that he calmly speculated on their separation, for aught she knew he might have pre-arranged the date and the manner in which they were to return to the status of a bowing acquaintance. With a sudden impulse the girl raised her head. A quickly-formed resolve lent a steady light to the blue eyes, the short upper lip was compressed, the soft oval face grew almost stern. "What would you wish me to be in the future?"

The question was demanded in an authoritative tone, but his eyes refused to meet hers, and there came no answer.

"Would you like me to be an old maid?"

"No!"

"Would you prefer me to be a nun?"

"I would rather that than some things."

"Would you like best to see me married?"

"Yes; I would be glad to see you well married."

"To somebody else?"

"To somebody who would be well off, and able to give you everything you could desire."

"A most desirable husband, one that few women are fortunate enough to get; but you have not said who you would like him to be."

"Somebody who could afford to bring you about everywhere. I think you enjoy travelling."

"Still this 'somebody' is not to be you. You would be satisfied to see me married to another man?"

Involuntarily she had placed a hand on his shoulder, and in the seconds which elapsed before his reply her breathing seemed to have ceased, her lips parted slightly, and her deep blue eyes grew dim with an unconscious appeal. Flattering, as if the words were wrung from him by the mere strength of her will, he answered—

"Under those circumstances I could wish you married to another."

One long indrawing of her breath, and Nellie turned from him with an instinctive longing to hide her head somewhere, anywhere till she should have conquered this dull aching, and learned to face the world with this strange soul-void which seemed to drain away all energy from body and mind. A fierce storm was steadily rising, and scarcely had she left the shelter of Kieran's arm than wind and rain attacked her unresisting person, and were it not for his prompt support she must have staggered against the wall. With a passionate movement he gathered her in his arms, and although still handicapped with the umbrella managed to hold her there for some minutes.

"Are we not going to be always friends, I could not give you up like that." Kieran spoke in hurried, nervous tones. A thousand wild words were on his lips, but he dare not give them utterance. It was madness to hold her thus, and to feel that, perhaps for the last time, she was lying passively in his embrace. Her hat had fallen back, and tiny waves of dark brown hair were blown across a broad white brow, eyes which might vie in tender bright-

ness with forget-me-nots after a spring shower, gazed sadly into her lover's—was it less than human that he bent down and pressed his lips on brow and cheek—was it unwomanly that her arms entwined themselves around his neck, and she raised her face to let him drink one long, deep kiss from her crimson lips.

The last pretence of daylight faded from the sky, the fields grew still more drear, the wind shrieked and yelled through the clustering trees and swept sobbing across the open country, and the lovers, wrapped in their own reflections, walked slowly towards the main road—indifferent, oblivious of the contending elements. Now and again Nellie shuddered at a dead leaf or a tuft of moss fluttered across her path—an emblem of that spirit-flower which had perished so hopelessly just when its fragrance had become her heart's most cherished treasure.

II.

Two hours later, Nellie lay listlessly in a low cushioned chair before the drawing-room fire. Away upstairs in her own little room hung the rough ulster, the mud-stained skirt which had shared her wild freak, and little dreamed Mrs. Barry, as her eye rested complacently on the small feet encased in dainty crewl slippers, what a weary road those little feet had travelled but an hour before. Such a quiet, grey-robed *petite*, with hands folded listlessly and eyes absently fixed on the glowing coals, so unlike the heroine of the passion play which was reflected in their red depths. The hissing of the flames sounded to her fancy like an echo of the storm, and tossed about on the winds, mingled with the taunts and jeers of a hundred mocking spirits, she listened incessantly to the words, "Are we not going to be always friends?" Friends! Aye, truly the bond of friendship had been sealed by the passion-brand of a lover's burning kiss. As Kieran said good-bye, at the entrance to the town, she promised to take him at his word, and through the night-darkness she could catch a gesture of impatience, and a muttered allusion to "misunderstanding." Would any one give her a chance of proving that she was in earnest? A deep flush mantled over cheek and brow as she remembered that she had almost offered herself to Kieran; had she not as good as said, "Set to work to build a house, and I shall wait for you until you can come and ask me to share its shelter." He had politely declined to touch either spade or trowel; advising her, as a friend, to bestow her hand on an unknown "somebody" whose banking account would provide for a perpetual railway ticket. Would such a man ever propose to her? In her present limp frame of mind she felt so humbled that it seemed improbable any one would ever think her worth a proposal. She tried to fancy herself a wife—"somebody's wife"—but the idea was so strange that imagination refused to lend the picture any distinctive colouring.

"Do you feel well, Nellie?" Mrs. Barry's rather loud voice caused Nellie to start nervously. All her dream-pictures seemed to fall to pieces with a crash, and it was with an effort that she assured her mother that she felt quite well, only a little tired.

"You are looking rather pale, and I was hesitating whether you are strong enough to hear a piece of news to-night, or if I ought to put off telling it until to-morrow." Mrs. Barry's tone was unmistakably important; and when one came to observe the satin dress with its heavy jet trimming, which so well became her large but stately figure, and to glance at the massive, florid face, with its lines of temper and determination, one perceived at once that she was a very pompous person indeed.

"You may tell me anything you like, mother." A faint smile passed over Nellie's lips. She knew Mrs. Barry loved the sound of her own voice, and most dutifully prepared to listen.

"It concerns you more than anyone else. Your father is most anxious that you should give a certain proposal favourable consideration, though, of course, neither he nor I wish to influence you against your will."

A proposal! The girl's hands closed over the arms of her chair—a parched, choking sensation came in her throat; cold, icy fingers seemed clutching her heart; while her brain burned like fever.

"Proposals are very scarce these times," the elder lady resumed after a pause, somewhat surprised at her daughter's silence, "and girls who have no fortunes cannot afford to refuse a good offer. A gentleman worth—say, three or four hundred a year, was speaking to your father to-day. He came a long journey by train this dreadful weather, for what do you think?"

The weary, grey figure was motionless, speechless, and the querist was obliged to answer her own question.

"To ask you to be his wife." This announcement was given with all due impressiveness, and again Mrs. Barry paused.

"Tell him, 'I will!'" With a sudden impulse Nellie sprang to her feet and crossed to her mother's side. The effort exhausted her strength—too weak to return to her fauteuil, she dropped into a chair beside the table, and leaned her head upon her hand.

Her mother regarded her with astonishment. "How very hysterical quiet people are at times," was her mental remark; aloud she said, "My dear, you have never asked his name, profession, or even where he lives. Don't you want to know all about a man before you promise to marry him?"

"I forgot those particulars." Nellie looked up with a cynical smile. "Of course I know you would not mention the matter if you and papa were not quite satisfied with him. All men are the same to me."

Mrs. Barry did not know whether to be pleased or perplexed. Something must be wrong with the child she felt sure. Nellie was wont to insist on having her own way in matters great and small, and who could ever imagine that in the most important matter of all, the choosing of a husband, she would submit to her father's selection with silent, passive indifference. Meanwhile, to satisfy her own conscientious scruples, she launched forth into a laudatory biography of her son-in-law elect, and the girl listened with apparently rapt attention. Was it her mother's words that made her shiver so at times; and why did the rustle of a falling cinder so startle her that her eyes

opened wide and strayed around the room with the half vacant stare of an awakening somnambulist?

III.

At certain periods St. Brendan's Church, Ardron, tried its best to look festive. The earthen floor was swept; the galleries, whose pews had not been painted within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, were dusted; the altar draped in clean linen, and when such luxuries were available, furnished with two upright vases of fresh flowers. In spite of all these preliminaries being gone through one January morning, it still presented a far from cheerful appearance. Perhaps it was owing to the artistic designs which the cobwebs and dust had traced across the diamond panes, that even in summer the sunlight found it difficult to effect an entrance in quantities sufficient to chase the shadows from their fortresses in the rafters and around dark confessionals; and with a close, heavy rain falling, like a grey curtain outside so little light penetrated under the galleries that the aisles and their occupants might have the sentineled frontier of the invisible world.

It was a miserable day for a wedding. The gloom within was more than equalled by the damp dulness without, and guests and spectators were kept busy during their moments of waiting trying to stifle their almost audible yawns. The bridegroom had already arrived. A middle-aged man, tall, erect, with an honest blonde face, and a manly, independent carriage. Every eye was bent on the door, and when at length a vision of soft, shimmering white appeared on the threshold, an involuntary thrill of admiration passed through the building. Leaning on her father's arm, Nellie advanced slowly, almost falteringly, towards the railing. Save for the dark pencilled brows and the long lashes which curled on her cheek, the sweet face was as colourless as marble. From the shadow of a confessional Kieran Cosgrove gazed on her with a face as white as her bridal robe, and a heart torn with a passion-tempest, a wild longing which prompted him to spring from his lair and, lifting her in his arms, fly with her anywhere, anywhere so that they two might find a refuge from that "society" which exacted such sacrifices. With compressed lips and clenched hands he attentively followed the service, in vain straining his ear to catch her responses. The irrevocable "I will" was spoken, the golden circle, emblem of eternity, glittered on her finger as she took her husband's arm and turned towards the sacristy.

"Heavens! how pure she is!" In his intense excitement he spoke almost aloud. His eyes drank in thirstily the beauty of the fair young face, the fragile, delicate loveliness that had something angelic in its passionless calm. Could this be the girl he had held in his arms, whose lips when he kissed them were warm and red, who had once loved him so, who might have been his bride? What immeasurable depths lay between them now! It was almost sacrilege to dream of touching her shining robe, and he would as soon have crushed one of the snowdrops in her bouquet as laid a profane hand on her marble fingers. The church door closed, his trance was broken, taking up his hat and avoiding all friendly recognition,

he made his exit through a side door, and turned his steps towards the very road where first we met Nellie. Steadily pursuing the same course, with bent head and rapt thought, he quickly reached the bridge, and paused on the very spot where she had often waited for him in the autumn tide, but three short months before. The memory of their last tryst came vividly before him. The familiar brown figure, with the fur cap and the huge umbrella which she had brought, "because he must have half," stood again beside him, once more he strove to shelter her from the wind and rain, and they walked up and down by the glaring limestone boundary. To think that he should have told her the future was hopeless, and obstinately setting aside her gentle remonstrance refused to believe that the world offers a place and a prize to every man. Now, when it was too late, he acknowledged her wisdom. His father was still a hale, strong man, there was nothing except indolence to prevent his seeking his fortune in more prosperous lands. This truth came home to him with a very Gehenna of bitterness when he remembered that only three months ago he had protested such a course was utterly impracticable. In every respect the scene was unchanged. The river still flowed dull and sullen through the arch, the fields were still faded, the same leafless trees stood out dark and bare against a dismal sky, white woolly sheep still grazed in the farmyard. There was missing only one figure, and never again would that adorn the landscape of his life. With a low moan he stretched out his arms to an imaginary companion, then letting them drop heavily on the parapet he pressed his temples against the cold stone. Deep, tearless sobs shook the man's strong frame as he realized that his own words had placed an eternal abyss between him and his darling. Hitherto he had cherished a vague belief that "something would turn up." He and Nellie would be satisfied to see one another from day to day, from year to year, until, at some indefinite period, old Father Time would kindly provide a residence for them, without requiring any more violent co-operation than the smoking of a reasonable number of pipes, and the moderate enjoyment of billiards and cricket. We learn to value many things only when the pain of loss teaches us how unconsciously we have grown to cling to them as part of our very being, thus it was that Kieran, for the first time, understood how he had instinctively turned to Nellie for sympathy in every pleasure and disappointment, how he had sought her simple wisdom in every difficulty.

The dull, heavy mist was clearing away; from a break in the leaden clouds the mid-day sun was sending forth a few watery rays to cheer the dismal earth as Kieran Cosgrove, raising himself from his recumbent position, strove to regain his self-control. "Can I ever forget her?" he whispered to himself. "Will she forget me? She has sworn to love and honour another, but can a mere motion of the lips kill the heart's pulse, can the wording of an oath still the passion-waves of a woman's love?" Well he knew that into her pure soul no unholy thought could enter, that, as the wife of another, she was dead to him. The river had witnessed their love's death-scene, the wind had borne its farewell words across the ruined hearth, he seemed to stand by the grave of his former life, and bending down he kissed the stone

where Nellie's hands had rested, even as men tenderly salute the damp moss beneath which their dear ones sleep.

 IV.

PEACE reigned in Debsbury—that is, the inhabitants were generally snoring on their peaceful pillows, and the midnight hush was disturbed only by the watchman's footsteps. A myriad brilliant stars kept vigil overhead, and the house-tops had donned a shimmering night-cap—a gift from the hoar-king. A sudden cry of "Fire!" quickly changed the scene. As if by magic the streets became crowded with half-dressed men, women, and children, windows were thrown up, lamps lighted, and an excited populace shouted and screamed, hustling one another from right to left in their eagerness to do battle with their common enemy. A clothing establishment was enveloped in flames. From every window long fiery tongues darted out into the midnight darkness, creeping along the wood-work, leaping from floor to floor—a dreadful sight it was, that lurid, angry monster hissing and seething within the doomed walls—devouring all the household gods of a hapless family.

Debsbury possessed only one fire-engine, and even that belonged to the military authorities, and the mysteries of its mechanism were looked upon as especially sacred to the military intelligence. At the first alarm the soldiers were instantly on the scene of action, but work as they would the flames still triumphed, and grave doubts and fears began to fill men's minds as, bit by bit, the roof fell in, and the red, glowing serpents wound themselves round the topmost rafters. A general terror seized the people. On each side of the burning house were gin-palaces and petroleum stores, and did these once take fire there could be no second opinion but that half the town would be blown up.

At this crisis a young soldier, carrying two buckets of water, called on his comrades to follow him, and in a few seconds appeared on a house-top overlooking the flames. Regardless of all danger, he leaned over the raging pit, emptying bucket after bucket in places which the hose could not reach. At length, seeing how futile were his efforts to quench, he set himself to tear down the rafters, working like a young Hercules to sever all communication with the flames. Willing hands helped the work, but, one after another, wounded and wearied, men retired, he alone seemed to possess a charmed life. Bruised, scorched, and drenched from head to foot, he appeared impervious to pain or fatigue. The danger conquered, he descended to the street, and then so completely did his marvellous energy desert him, that he was obliged to lean against a lamp-post for support.

"Why, old fellow, you are the hero of the night. You have done wonders for a delicate chap like you," said a jolly-looking soldier, pausing a moment beside him.

The white, drawn face, the hands pressed nervously to his side, attracted the man's attention, and his tone changed almost to affection, as he inquired—

"Are you in pain?"

"I think there is something the matter with

my ribs. A beam struck me as it was falling, and I am now beginning to feel the effects."

"You ought to go back to barracks; all our men will be returning directly, and you certainly have earned your rest."

"I will lend a hand until the work is quite finished," the younger man answered, making an effort to keep step with his companion; but scarcely had he advanced a yard when he tottered and must have fallen, were not strong arms quickly extended for support.

Without a word, the first speaker turned his face homewards, half-carrying, half-supporting, his fainting comrade.

V.

DECEMBER was ripening into Christmas-tide, and Debsbury shop-fronts were beginning to display tempting advertisements of the many good things to be had within. The burning was already far back in the annals of the past, and people were so generally busy in pleasant anticipation of the festivities, that they had ceased to be curious concerning the fate of the young soldier whose exertions had secured a merry Christmas in many homes. Debsbury barracks occupied an elevated position, and, as if to ensure a sufficiency of oxygen to the inmates, the infirmary stood apart from the other buildings in a corner of the square where every wind from the four points could sweep around it unchecked. The whitewashed wards, with their long narrow stretcher-beds, were scrupulously neat; order and cleanliness reigned in every detail, but in the absence of all womanly influence the stiff military discipline drew a line of lonely isolation around many a sufferer's couch. In one of the smaller rooms, propped up by pillows into a half-sitting posture, a young man was lying with half-closed eyes, and hands clasped rigidly over the greyish-blue counterpane. The bright, searching sunlight streamed through the curtainless window, magnifying the coarse warp of the quilt, and searching every furrow and hollow of the invalid's emaciated face.

A cheerful coal fire burned in the grate, and before it sat a soldier reading a newspaper. From time to time his eyes strayed from the page to the bed, and his thoughts so persistently hovered around its occupant that he at length abandoned the pretence of reading, and, allowing the paper to rest unheeded on his knees, gazed with a troubled, kindly regret on the wasted features, death-like in their motionless pallor. At length the stillness became oppressive.

"Jack," he said softly, "d'ye feel the pain's better?"

The half-closed eyes opened with a dreamy smile.

"Thank you, Dick; I'm quite easy to-day."

Dick stood up, and by way of sustaining his resolution and disguising his real concern, seized the coal-shovel, and began to replenish the fire. "D'ye know, I was jist considering as may be, there's somebody over yonder as ye'd like to wish 'A Merry Christmas,' and as ye're not at present strong enough to do much writin', perhaps I could be of sarvice, an' drop 'em a line." The old sergeant's voice shook a little, and the fire seemed to require an unusual amount of trimming.

For some moments the silence was again unbroken. Jack's thoughts had flown leagues away, a misty film came over the grey eyes, and the delicate lips trembled in the half shadow of the fair moustache. Dick turned round and awkwardly approached the bedside. His rough, honest face was full of sympathy, and his hard hand was gentle as a woman's when he laid it caressingly on the bronze curls. "Since ye jined three year ago, I've always stood yer friend. I never asked the name o' yer father, or the town ye cam' from, but in coorse I know ye're one of thim as runs away with romantic notions about sodgering. If ye had yer health I'd niver intrude on yer confidence, but I thought mebbe as there might be some wan as would be glad to hear from ye at Christmas time, an' belike to pay ye a Christmas visit."

"You have been kinder than father or brother," said the younger man tremulously, "and had I any confidence to give, you should be my father confessor. For many a day I have read my doom in your face—I am dying. Do not try to hide it from me—it is the best off news—the glad tidings from heaven that a merciful God has sent me. For five years my life has been an aimless, useless existence, I have been a stranger to friendship or affection—and now I wish to die as I have lived—alone." His voice failed him, and the weary head sank still deeper on the pillow.

Sergeant Dick offered no further remonstrance; he returned to his chair and fell into a brown study. Could he have caught a glimpse of the dream-faces with which his suggestion had filled the room, he would scarcely have yielded so passively.

Five years ago, Kieran Cosgrove had pressed his hat over his brows, and turned his back on every fair ambition which lends a dignity and an interest to life's sordid details. As the weeks and months dragged slowly by, work had daily become more distasteful; there was no star of hope to cheer ever so faintly the dreary monotony of an utterly commonplace existence, time itself seemed as changeless as eternity. His brothers grew from youth to manhood, and the Ardrone gossip's began to look on him as an idle fixture in his father's warehouse. He was a wild fellow, they said, too much indulged at home to dream of working for an independence. And yet his wild oats were sown with a very harmless seed, and few names, great or small, were so blameless as this idler's. Two winters came and went, and in the springtime the little town became deeply interested in the news that Mrs. Carson *née* Barry, was about to re-visit her old home. One bright April forenoon Kieran was arranging some business at the railway booking-office, as the early train steamed into the station.

As he passed through the little iron gate his eye fell on Mr. Barry's low phaeton, and standing beside it, Nellie. She was bending over an armful of crimson drapery which peeped mysteriously between the folds of her dark blue travelling cloak, and he had time to note every curve and line of the well-known figure before she raised her head. Their eyes met, one moment of startled surprise, a slight bow, an uplifting of his hat, and the ordeal was passed. That night as he lay awake, his brain busy with many an abstruse problem of fate and fortune, a feverish unrest possessed him;

all the phantoms of the past crowded thickly round him endowed with new life and vigour, and he felt that never again could he sink back into the old routine passivity. A week later, he was traversing Liverpool vainly soliciting employment; yet another month he had taken the Queen's shilling, and as John Brown, all trace of Kieran Cosgrove was lost amidst the thousands of her brave defenders.

Would he write to Nellie and tell her that he died true to his only love, that no shadow had ever sullied her image in his heart. She had loved him once, and with the death-dew on his brow, surely it could do no wrong to send her a lover's parting vow. Strong with a momentary excitement, he asked for pen and paper, but when they were furnished him, his resolution had already expended itself. The wind was rising outside and his attention was fixed purposeless on the dense night clouds hurrying across the sky. His days on earth were numbered, soon his spirit would have mingled with the limitless hereafter, and then?

"I'd better light the lamp. A body can't see to read, let alone write a letter."

The sergeant's gruff tones recalled Kieran to the lower world. A new resolution came to him as he watched the trimming of the wick, and without giving himself time to again waver, he seized the pen, wrote his own name and his father's address on a sheet of paper, and enclosed it in a blank envelope.

"When I am gone," he said, "open that, Dink, and write a line to the old governor, just to let him know, I never disgraced the name."

There was a suspicious moisture about the sergeant's eyes as his fingers closed over the packet, and an unusual tenderness in his touch as he lifted the young soldier smoothing his pillow, and tending him with all a woman's gentleness.

VI.

MIDNIGHT chimes were echoing the angel's message over hill and dale. Glad hearts welcomed their notes in many a happy home, and in Debsbury barracks many a stern face relaxed, and men grown callous to faith and love listened subdued as peal after peal awakened long-sleeping memories of home and childhood. A sentinel paused in his measured pacing, and resting his musket on the ground waited with bowed head until the last reverberation had sped away into space. A slight shudder passed through the man's frame as he resumed his walking.

"What a Christmas-eve!" he exclaimed half aloud, giving three deliberative knocks at the dead-house door.

Within, lying on a wooden stretcher, was a shrouded figure, and could you have entered an hour later with the relieve-guard and lifted the white winding-sheet, the cold, clear starlight would have shown you all that was mortal of Kieran Cosgrove. Utterly alone, unknown, forgotten, he slept a deep, dreamless sleep, all trace of pain and passion banished from the fair young face—the unquiet, longing heart at rest for ever.

The sweet strains of the *Adeste* awoke the sleeping inhabitants of an Irish inland city. Down the deserted streets, passed the darkened houses,

marched the temperance band playing the chastest of Christmas carols. In the subdued light of a cosey nursery bending over two rosy child-forms, a man and a woman stood hand in hand.

"May the infant Saviour spare us them many Christmases to come," the man murmured reverently, and the mother breathed a heartfelt "Amen!"

As she kissed each flushed cheek was there no spirit near to whisper one regretful thought for a soul that even then was winging its flight heavenwards.

MAY.

BY CHARLES WORTE.

"**ROSY-FOOTED** May," as this month has been called, is poetically supposed to be the most charming of the whole year. Scarcely a poet from Chaucer to the present day but has sung of the delights of May, the goddess of spring, who, according to Peacham, should be drawn with a "sweet and amiable countenance, clad in a robe of white and green, embroidered with daffodils, hawthorns and blue-bottles." Now is the time when our hedgerows and orchards and gardens should give fair promise of the rich harvest of fruit and flowers in the coming time of Nature's luxuriance;

"One boundless blush, one white empurpled shower
Of mingled blossoms."

In "merrie England" of the olden days it was on the 1st of May in the rural districts that the May-pole, adorned with garlands of flowers, was brought in high procession from the woods, and set up on the village green, and around it the villagers danced and made merry for hours. It was then that the prettiest girl was chosen to be Queen of the May, and all were her loyal subjects for that day. Even London had its May-pole—

"Amidst the area wide they took their stand,
Where the tall May-pole o'erlooked the Strand"—

that would be a little to the east of Somerset House. Those were the light-hearted, jolly times, when people were not in such a universal hurry as they are now-a-days, but had time to be merry; when priests and people, kings and nobles, gentle and simple threw aside their worldly cares on May-day and heartily entered into these rustic enjoyments. Did not Henry VIII. ride a-maying from Greenwich to Shooter's Hill with Queen Catherine, accompanied by many lords and ladies?

Even the grave Milton burst into song on May morning:

"Hail, bounteous May! thou dost inspire
Mirth and youth and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale both boast thy blessing."

And every man, according to old Stour, would in May "walk into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kind."

Alas! that May should no longer be "merrie," and that confidence should no longer exist either in its floral or atmospheric delights. It is notorious that poets are the most credulous of beings, but we can scarcely believe the whole of them to have been guilty of poetical misrepresentation respecting the month of May. It is more charitable to conclude that the seasons have changed, and certainly not to advantage. Be that as it may, ordinary people not endowed with poetical imagination, but more probable liable to bronchial affections, would be little likely to trust in balmy breezes, and would think twice before going a-maying or any other out-door pastime in the month of May in this year of grace 1885. Whether this praise of May was only an extensive use of hyperbole, or poetical license—a faint line drawn between truth and fiction, who shall decide? We have seen snow, hail and chilblains in May, and do not yet intend to discard thick boots, over-coats and umbrellas.

It has also been said that May is what is called a "trying" month to persons ailing with critical complaints. In the country they say of such people, "Ah! he'll never get up May-hill."

The superstitious with regard to the month of May, which are still prevalent in many parts of the country, are as unfavourable as they are curious. In some parts they say, and believe, that babies born in this month are always ailing. "You may try," is the discouraging remark, "but you'll never rear them." And as for kittens that are then brought to life, they are sure to be short-lived. A watery grave will be their doom, for no one would be likely to rear cats whose delight in their mature years is to suck the breath of children, and catch snakes instead of rats and mice.

Again, to people who are about to marry we will not echo *Punch's* advice and say "Don't," but will merely remind them of certain lines in Ovid, which contain a solemn warning to all who contemplate matrimony in the present month:

"Si te proverbia tangunt
Mense molas Maio nubere vulgus ait"—

which may be freely rendered, "If proverbs have any weight with you, the common people say, Bad prove the wives that are married in May." Take warning, therefore, all you maidens, who have fallen a victim to that wicked God

"Love, whose month was ever May,"

and postpone the fulfillment of your vows, both for your own and your future husband's sake, until a more auspicious season.

A notable and unfortunate instance of an alliance which took place in this month is furnished in the history of Mary Queen of Scots, whose marriage with Bothwell may possibly have given rise to the superstition which is very rife in Scotland. The lines we have quoted from Ovid were affixed to the gate of Holyrood Palace by some one who was displeased with that ill-advised match.

To those ladies who are anxious about their complexions—and what lady is not?—we must not omit to mention the prescription of an old writer, whosays, "that for beautifying the skin there is nothing in the world so efficacious as to bathe it in

May-dew. We are half-inclined to think that the originator of this somewhat singular recipe must have meant it "sarkastical," as poor Artemus Ward used to say, and was really figuratively recommending early rising; as the May-dew, like the unfortunate "early-worm," is only to be discovered by those not addicted to lying in bed until the sun has aired the earth. The ladies of our cities certainly cannot go tripping over dewy meadows in search of Nature's cosmetic, but they can resolve to rise early; and if desirous of cultivating that invaluable habit as well as benefiting their complexions, now is the time of year to begin; remember! May-dew does not last for ever.

May games may be said to have fallen into disuetude. The Puritans did much by their preaching and writing to make them unpopular; and we are afraid that much of the narrow spirit of sectarianism which was introduced by these uncomfortable people still lingers with us. Jack-in-the-green, which were plentiful in the metropolis in our young days, are gone with the May-poles. Even the children who bring round the garlands, do it in a half-shy sort of way, and appear to have no heart in the matter—for which the miserable, mangy look of the garlands themselves is perhaps sufficient excuse. We know one village in Yorkshire where the May-pole still stands, but it is more as a melancholy relic of the times that are gone, than for any practical use to which it is put. At Boston, in the United States, where so many good old English customs are yet in vogue, they still celebrate May-day; the children do not carry garlands, but are all dressed in white. A very pretty sight it is to see the school-girls from little dots of three or four to fifteen or sixteen years old tripping to school arrayed in their clean white dresses.

Notwithstanding that May-day can no longer be looked upon as a festival; it is without doubt a season of rejoicing. A time when Nature is starting into renewed life, when naked boughs are being clothed with fresh verdure, and the birds intent on family cares are singing their sweetest notes, cannot fail to excite feelings of gladness and delight. Of all earth's choicest blossoms none are so dear as those of spring, which we seize with avidity, and set up in a decorative fashion and bow before in delighted homage. The nightingale is singing in the copse, and the iterated cry of the cuckoo is heard the live-long day. The sky-lark, the wood-lark and the willow-warbler are joining the tuneful choir; and all nature, both animate and inanimate, are bursting into life and beauty after the darkness and silence of winter. So, though sometimes "winter lingering chills the lap of May," we will yet rejoice at its advent as the forerunner of the gentle south wind which shall spread harmony and beauty everywhere around.

"Ah! my heart is weary waiting—

Waiting for the May—

Waiting for the pleasant rambles,
Where the fragrant hawthorn-brambles,
With the woodbine alternating,
Scent the dewy way.

Ah! my heart is weary waiting—
Waiting for the May."

Before concluding we must not forget to mention that May may be considered a right loyal month.

No sovereign of England since the Conquest has died during the month of May, although each of its eleven brethren has proved fatal to one or more of our monarchs. It was on the 29th when one of our kings "enjoyed his own again;" and it was on the 24th when our most gracious Queen was born; let us hope it will be long before we cease to rejoice on this anniversary.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. P. THEED.

CHAPTER XL.

"BETTER TO FORGET."

AN announcement of the discovery of a will, under which Richard Merritt was disinherited, was inserted several times in succession in all the papers which had contained the original advertisement; and as weeks and months went by, without any sign that any one of them had reached its mark, this comparatively small trouble seemed to be going the way of the rest. One thing was certain with regard to it, and that was that should Richard Merritt come back a poor man, under the mistaken impression that his father had left him lord of the soil, Phillis would not do for him less than had been expected at his hands for her, when their positions appeared to be reversed. But no news came of him, or of that other. In her letters—for she wrote me thenceforth pretty frequently—she never made any allusion to the latter, direct or indirect; but I fancied, as time went on, they read less hopefully, that she dwelt less upon this and that than she had intended doing, and was less cheerful in herself.

Just before Christmas, however, the very week I was going down, I got a letter, the like of which I had never had from her before—a curious wild letter it seemed to me.

"Come," she wrote, "I know you will have to come soon, and the sooner the better. I am longing to see you and talk to you. I cannot and will not write what I have to say, but God has given me, at last, something to live for. I wanted it badly—I never knew until I got it how badly; but, dear friend, it is not what I asked for, what I have waited for all these years, so you must not think it is *that*. Perhaps it is better as it is. He knows best—any way, I want you—so come, come, come!"

This was what she wrote, and if her object was to mystify me more than I had ever been mystified before, she succeeded to perfection. The one thing which seemed clear upon the face of it, was the one thing which I could never—save upon her own testimony—have believed of her. She had renounced her old ideal of happiness, and with it—for the renunciation of the one involved that of the other—her old love. What under the face of Heaven could this be, of which she could write to me—to *me*, who had been the repository of all her hopes, and fears, and agonies, that it was possibly better as it was.

Well, after all, she was only a woman, like the

rest. All she had wanted, probably, all her life long, was the opportunity to show herself in her true colours—the colours common to her sex. I have no fault to find with them. I do not see why we are to expect from these weaker vessels a fidelity we do not give them; why their hearts should be called upon to break, whilst ours are barely bruised; not at all. But though one finds no fault with one's friend's Brummagem china, which may be very pretty and serviceable in its way, one does *not* like to find that one's own dainty little morsel of Dresden is not Dresden at all, and has been a "take in" from beginning to end.

So I had a great disappointment in Phillis.

It was not to be wondered at after all, if I *had* come to feel a sort of proprietorship in her. She was not fifteen when I first knew her, you must bear in mind, and now she was nine-and-twenty. It startled me to think how time had flown when I began to reckon—and from the very first she had made a friend and confidante of me. If she had not taken my advice, at least she had made a point of asking it, and now she had gone and done something—something which was to make or mar her happiness—without consulting me at all. The more I thought of it, the more I felt justified in my wrath, and I nursed it accordingly.

Did it burn more fiercely still when I saw her, saw the light in her eyes and the smile on her lips, saw her as I had not seen her for I know not how many years, as I had been learning somehow, I know not how, to dream of her at night and picture her by day ever since she walked and talked with me that June night under the apple-trees? Did it burn more fiercely then? I think not. If I was a little sorrowful on my own account, I hope I was glad upon hers, as I followed her through the farm-kitchen—where Mattie was as busy putting up "Christmas" as if she expected somebody to see it—into the Stone Parlour, where *he*, whoever he might be, was awaiting us.

She had said he was there; but I thought for the moment as I glanced round the room that he had shown the better taste of the two, and had left us for a time to ourselves. Phillis, however, knew better. She walked straight up to the window with the smile still on her face, and, drawing the curtain on one side—"look here," she said, "here is my treasure trove, such a bad boy" (kiss No. 1) "and so ashamed of himself" (kiss No. 2) "that he must needs run away and hide!"

Oh, Dick Merritt! Poor little fatherless Dick! Was I ever so glad to see any one in all my life as to see him!

The child may have seen the change from grim to glad in the face of his aunt's visitor, and it may have emboldened him—I cannot say; but he was soon coaxed out of his hiding-place and on to Phillis's knees, and thence by degrees, after the manner of such small folk, he made his way on to mine and became quite pleasant and confidential. He was a fine little fellow of six, tall and intelligent for his age, and seemed already as happy and as much at home as if he had never known any other surroundings.

"He has had so many changes, poor little chap!" Phillis said pityingly. "It is two years as far as we can make out since his mother died, and then for a little time after that Richard seems to have kept the children—there were two of them

then with him; but I suppose when the baby died, he thought this one would thrive better elsewhere and with other children, and so he was put out to nurse, as they call it. Well, that was all right, as long as the people were paid; but about a year ago, as nearly as possible a year ago, things got from bad to worse with the child's father. He had never done much good, and less since he had lost his wife, and the payments began to flag, and then just as they were losing all patience there came an end to them altogether, for Richard died. He had led a strange life I hear, and cared little for any one or anything; but he fretted about the child, and there was a man with him when he died, who had led the same freebooting sort of life, and had seen a good deal of him, and he took such pity upon him that he promised, though he had more to do for his own than he knew how, to see that little Dick did not want. His name is Robert Aitken," she added, addressing herself half to the child, half to me. "And Dick knows it very well. Every night and every morning he prays 'God bless Robert Aitken.'"

There was little more to tell. Aitken had been true to his trust, and after a time, Providence had put into his hands a paper containing Mr. Needham's advertisement. Some vague suspicious notion he had got into his head that if it became known, whilst the child was still at that great distance, that his father was dead, it might operate to his disadvantage, prevented him from writing, and induced him to cast about for means to send him over to England. He found a friend and coadjutor in the captain of a sailing vessel, bound on its return-trip to the old country; and hence it had resulted that on a dark November afternoon some three weeks since, Phillis Merritt, sitting in the gloaming with no other company than that of her own thoughts, was surprised by a visit from her lawyer, accompanied by a small boy and a kindly, fatherly seaman, furnished with convincing proofs that the poor little object with him—he had been very sea-sick and was altogether very wretched—was indeed Stephen Merritt's grandson. The good man must have been well pleased at the welcome they found—he and his charge. I doubt if, in the opinion of its mistress, there was anything in the house good enough for them, and I am sure, too, though on that subject Phillis was always silent, that, if they were not, as they fondly imagined, producing an heir to the estate, the kind-hearted American and his friend were as well paid for all they had done as though he had been the heir twice over.

He was a pretty little fellow, and I did not wonder that she had taken to him. It was a good thing too that he was so young he had little to unlearn, and already she fancied, not without reason, that she was "making her own" of him. The difference he made in her life, who that has not led such a life can tell? He gave her occupation for the whole day, for when he was in bed and asleep, she was hard at work for him, and the delight of it! the pretty things, daintier than I could have supposed her capable of producing, seeing she had seen so little, which even I was called upon to wonder at and admire. She was happier than I had seen her since her girlhood; but she had her anxieties still, and when she had left Mattie upstairs with the little one, she began to talk to me of them. It had become a serious

question with her whether she should remain at the Farm or not. It was a good farm, and had doubled in value since Merritt first came into possession of it, and the managing man—she did not dignify him with the title of bailiff—was, she believed, honest, but there were reasons apart from pounds, shillings, and pence, which made her doubtful whether she would be doing wisely or well to stay there. She had tried, but tried in vain, to overcome Mattie's aversion, amounting to an almost superstitious horror, to the house, and now, she confessed, since the winter, with its short days and long night had finally set in, she did not feel so superior to the old woman's prejudices as she had done before. The place was lonesome and replete with memories, which she would gladly leave behind her, and yet she should not feel at home she supposed anywhere else. She had asked Mr. Needham what he should advise her to do, and he had turned it off with a jest. I could guess what the jest had been by the heightened colour with which she alluded to it. Natural enough that he should suggest her finding somebody to take care of her—home and all; but finding that pleasantries unwelcome (I suppose), and seeing she was in earnest, he had talked it over with her seriously enough, putting the *pros* and *cons* before her very fairly and sensibly indeed.

"He did not advise me," she said, "to part with the farm, and, indeed, it had not come into my head to do so—I should like it, when anything happens to me to come to Dick. So then we talked about letting it, and he said—which of course, I knew—that it might be some little time before we met with a tenant to suit us, and that it would be a pity to be in a hurry; but still he did not dissuade me. He seemed to think on the whole I should be better away; only," she added, with a little bitterness, "Like me, he did not know where I was to go to."

I looked at her hard—I could not help it—when she said that. Did she understand, I wondered, that it was almost like challenging a man for a woman to talk as she talked, or at any rate, that it would have been, had I known less of her heart? The way, too, in which she alluded to the child's coming into the property, coupled with my recollection of the letter, which had so misled me, all seemed to point to a renunciation of the old hope and the old faith, so long and so steadfastly cherished. And yet I could scarcely believe in it. She saw me staring at her, though—whether wilfully or not it does not matter. She misinterpreted the reason.

"It is odd anybody should be so desolate, is it not? Father"—it was noticeable that ever since the reading of the will, she had ceased to avoid the mention of his name, and had gone back to the old familiar word—"Father, I believe, knew of a distant cousin or two of his own—knew of them but did not know them—but mother had nobody belonging to her. She was an orphan from her birth, and if she had any relations at all, they never came forward, and she never heard of them. It was a great lady who took a fancy to her and brought her up—and—I am all alone in the world," she wound up suddenly.

"All but Dick," I observed sententiously.

"All but Dick. I had forgotten Dick—bless his heart!"

I could not resist asking her the question which was uppermost in my mind.

"Is there nobody else you have forgotten, Phillis?"

"You?" she said smiling. "You are very good and very kind, but you don't belong to me, you know."

I answered her hastily that I was not thinking of myself.

Her eyes met mine, with a sudden flash of intelligence.

"No," she said, with a great quietness and sadness, "I have not forgotten him; but I dare not count him. When I remember how long it is since I last heard of him, it seems to be folly to go on hoping. And I cannot help thinking that, if he were alive, he must have seen or heard—it has been made so public—and if he *has* seen or *has* heard, and has neither written nor come," there was a colour now in the usually colourless face, which would have surprised you—"Why, then, it is better to forget."

Better to forget him, Phillis! Better a thousand times, and *yet*—somehow I was sorry!

Though it was a relief to me—though it seemed, even at the moment, to be the breaking down of a barrier between us, which had struck me lately as it had never struck me before—still, I was sorry. Was it possible that, without knowing it, I had loved her the better all this time for her folly?

"You don't say anything," she added presently with a little nervous laugh. "I thought you would be quite pleased to find I had become so sensible."

"The substance is better than the shadow," I replied evasively. "even though it weigh no heavier than little Dick."

It was but a lame way out of it; but it seemed to satisfy her. Possibly, she did not care to dwell upon the subject, and I hastened, on my own account, to change it. I had been cherishing a hope, in common with Lucy and her mother, for the last two months, that I might induce Phillis to come up to us for Christmas. I proposed this to her now; but, after all she had just told me about Mattie's nervousness and her dislike of the house, I was not surprised at the firmness of her refusal.

"Not now," she said. "It is out of the question. Perhaps in the summer, in the bright weather, we might come, if you would have us, Dick and I. But whenever we do, you must have a holiday. We could never do without you to take us about and show us the things, for I should want as much showing as Dick. He is just six years old," she added, with a smile, which was a little amused, if it was also a little sad, "and he has seen more—oh! a great deal more—than I have."

I told her I thought a good deal would be given by a great many fashionable folk, who had seen and done all that was to be seen and done in this great world of London, for the simple power of being able to enjoy anything as she would enjoy her first sight of any one of the wonders of which they had had their fill.

"The greatest pleasure to me," she said, "will be to see Dick's. Children are always delighted with anything new. For my part, I think I shall be frightened at anything so big and so noisy, and glad to get back again. But I will come—certainly I will come, in the summer."

And she kept her word. In the summer rather late in the summer, when the crush of the season was over, and I was at liberty to take my holiday, she came.

(To be continued.)

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

THE meaning of the phrase "weights and measures" is probably known by many and understood by few. Most persons affirm that the term means standard weights and standard measures; but few are able to explain why it is that certain weights and measures now in use have been adopted as standards. Certain it is that the grain, for instance, is a very ancient standard of weight. It formed the basis of many systems long before the Christian era, and it is one of the most important factors in the existing Imperial standards. The statutes of Henry III., Edward I., and Henry VII., relating to weights and measures, naturally made mention of the grain. Indeed they enacted that thirty-two grains of wheat, properly gathered and dried, should make a pennyweight, and this continued to be the rule until it was provided that the pennyweight should undergo further division—into twenty-four equal parts, to be called grains. Thus, originally, thirty-two grains of wheat made a pennyweight, and in the changes that have since taken place the term grain has been retained, notwithstanding that the present grain is rather higher in weight than the original. These remarks apply more particularly to troy weight, and it may be said that that is not the standard now in common use. It is still, however, the standard for determining the weight of the precious metals—gold and silver—and it is used generally in philosophical experiments. Moreover, troy weight was the principal standard formerly in use, the avoirdupois, which now finds most favour, being a sort of offshoot. Hence, in speaking of the origin of standard weights, it is more correct to refer to the troy system than to any other.

Troy weight possesses additional importance from the fact that measures of capacity have been taken from it. Thus, the statute of Henry III., already alluded to, provided that eight pounds of troy wheat, taken from the middle of the ear, should form a standard measure of capacity, that standard being a gallon; and it will readily be seen that, with such a standard, others, whether smaller or larger, might easily be found by division or multiplication. With regard to other measures, such, for example as Linear measure, a different basis was adopted. In the present day, in small towns or out-of-the-way villages, the housewife will often resort to the simple expedient of stretching a piece of cloth from her chin to the tips of her fingers—the arm being extended meanwhile—should she desire to test its length. A man will ascertain the length of a beam by "spanning" it, or the size of a garden by walking round it and counting his steps, and calculating either the feet or yards. It is probably in such processes as these that the origin of Linear measure may be found. It is pretty clear that the earliest standards were adopted because they represented parts of the

human form. The foot naturally suggests itself. The cubit meant the average length of the arm from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. It is from the arm that the yard is taken, while the space from the extremity of one hand to the other, the arms being extended, gave the fathom. This was at the best but a rude form of measurement, which varied according to the size of the individual, and which caused endless confusion to vendors and purchasers. A fixed standard became an absolute necessity, and it was because of this that a rod, the length of an average foot, was adopted as the basis of measurement. The yard took its place because it represented half the space which a man could reach by extending both arms, and from this have many other standards of measurement been derived.

It must not be supposed, however, that all these changes took place quickly, or that, when made, they were adopted with alacrity. On the contrary measures of reform, even when most desirable, often win their way in favour slowly. A century ago, the weights and measures used in different parts of England varied so much that it is almost impossible to conceive how so much confusion came to be tolerated. The divergence proved a most perplexing hindrance to commerce. But though many complaints were made it was not till 1825 that an Act, which in some respects may be called an Act of Uniformity, was passed, providing that, on the first of January, 1826, the standard weights and measures of London should be the standard weights and measures for the whole kingdom. Even now, there is occasional confusion owing to the different methods of calculation in various parts of the country. Goods are sold by measure here, by weight there, and by number in some other place. Especially does the remark apply to garden produce, and the difference is sometimes so great that a person going from one part of the country to another hardly knows what he is buying. The technical terms applied to the weight of bread differ in various towns, though perhaps the difference in respect to flour is even more marked. In one town you buy a "gallon" of flour, in another a "scale," in a third a "pound" or its multiple, in a fourth a "quartern," and in a fifth a "peck." In fact the confusion is very great, and it is only by reference to it that any idea can be formed of the inconvenience caused when even the "standards" also varied.

A further attempt to secure absolute uniformity may be found in the Weights and Measures Act, 1878. But even that Act has not yet accomplished its purpose. Sir Thomas Farrer lately presented a report to the Board of Trade with regard to the effect of its operation, and that report shows that certain weights which are stamped as correct by the inspector of one district are sometimes condemned as inaccurate by the inspector of another district, though the Act particularly provides that a weight once "duly" stamped by an inspector may afterwards be used in any part of the kingdom without being restamped. Possibly weights may vary through constant use, so that if one were found accurate by an inspector to-day, it may become inaccurate at the end of a year. But that is for the inspectors and owners of weights to determine. One of the greatest difficulties seems to be to define in an Act the precise amount of error which may be permitted, in view of the great

variety of weights used in trade, the different uses to which they are put, and the divers modes of trade in various parts of the kingdom. For as it is almost impossible to find two "standards" in which some variation may not be found, it is reasonable to allow that many weights and measures are correct, even though they do not agree to a shade with the standard. But it is, of course, necessary in all such cases that there should be some regard to the uses to which the weights and measures may be put, for it is evident that a slight difference against the purchaser in the weighing of gold would be more material than the same difference in the weighing of flour. Numerous illustrations of this will at once occur to the reader. Indeed much might be written about the tricks which may be played by careful attention to so simple a matter as weights and measures; and the whole subject is one in which every buyer is or should be personally interested.

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

MRS. MALONEY'S AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

IRELAND now-a-days does not seem a favourable spot in which to pitch one's dramatic tent. The traditional pleasure-loving Irishman appears to linger only in the plays of Mr. Boucicault, and the stern, high-souled being who represents "New Ireland" has no sympathy with such frivolities as music or the theatre.

He feels that a patriot of his stamp should not waste his time on trifles, and he devotes all his energies to the severance of the connection between England and his fatherland, and between his neighbours' cows and their tails.

Nevertheless, one comes here and there upon quiet districts where "agitation" is not, and little country towns which still, figuratively, touch their hats to the landlords, and have not been rendered too *blazé* by strong political meat to appreciate the milder literary sustenance of a penny reading.

One of these favoured—or perhaps I should say, forsaken—places is the small market-town of Mowlafeen. Absorbed in its own placid projects and unambitious enterprises, it regards all innovations with distrust; and in consequence of this happy state of affairs, the peaceful arts flourished in Mowlafeen.

Concerts, recitations, amateur theatricals, were of frequent occurrence there. The Society of Mowlafeen Christian Young Men constantly gave the most delightful entertainments; and instructive itinerant lecturers always felt sure of good audience when they came to this exemplary little town.

The town councillors were musical almost to a man (the exceptions being promising amateur actors). The Town Hall was invariably lent, free of charge, for any charitable undertaking; the town-organist was appointed and paid by the same liberal and artistic body; and in their selection for that post of a certain Mrs. Maloney they displayed their usual intelligent penetration.

To see Mrs. Maloney move down the main

street in a sort of quiet *andante sostenuto* was in itself a musical education. She was habitually clad in a harmony of black and crimson, through which a long gold chain meandered like the theme of a fugue. A *nocturne* in black and gold bedecked her stately head (I say "*nocturne*" advisedly, for it certainly looked as if she slept in it), and she always carried, as insignia of office, a formidable-looking roll of music. She was short and very stout; a thick black fringe just reached to her eyebrows; her eyes were large and prominent, and she had what her admirers called "a beautiful singing mouth" (by which they apparently meant to suggest an aperture resembling that of the oyster).

But though not blessed with personal charms, the unseen beauty of the soul was hers in no small degree.

She it was who first discovered the destitution of the lower classes in Mowlafeen. It was her philanthropic mind that promptly plotted the means of assisting them; and to her belongs the honour of suggesting that nothing less than *Macbeth* should form the *pièce de résistance* of the entertainment she determined to get up for their benefit.

No sooner had this noble scheme occurred to Mrs. Maloney than she sallied forth in search of Mr. Nolan, the President of the Christian Young Men's Society.

Mr. Nolan was a dapper youth, with fair curling hair and a small, artificial smile.

"My gracious now, Mrs. Maloney," he said, when that lady had unfolded her plan, "that's a sweet idea! I was just thinking the society should give some sort of entertainment; and now, with *your* help"—and Mr. Nolan looked unutterable things as the council of war began.

It speedily became known in Mowlafeen that the Town Hall had been asked for by the Christian Young Men, and promised to them for some mysterious performance.

Speculations were rife as to its probable nature; there was a vague belief it was to be something unusually exciting; but no one in their wildest flight of imagination had soared as high as Mrs. Maloney; and consequently when posters appeared with—

"MACBETH"

in letters at least a foot long, and underneath, in milder type—

"*All proceeds to be distributed amongst the poor of of this town,*"

there was a decided sensation in Mowlafeen.

Two years before an attempt had been made to play some scenes from *Othello*, and the dismal failure of the result was still fresh in every one's mind. Consequently, when the *Macbeth* advertisement appeared, there was found a company of scoffers, who, drawing their deductions from the unfortunate *Othello*, prophesied another fiasco.

The leader of the opposition was a certain Mrs. Sullivan, whom Mrs. Maloney had irrevocably offended by refusing to instruct the Misses Sullivan in the rudiments of her art.

"Common teaching," she had said, "was not in her way of music at all."

Then Mrs. Sullivan, a lady of considerable local

importance, had waxed very wroth at the insult done to her offsprings' talents, and thenceforward she always spoke of Mrs. Maloney as "that owld fiddler," and lost no opportunity of annoying her.

But while the outside world ignorantly scoffed, "the committee of management" had been very busy. The performance was to be a combination of concert and theatricals. It had been decided that only parts of *Macbeth* could be played, and the music was to make up for all deficiencies, as a Mowlafeen audience liked to get its money's worth, even though the performance was for charity.

The *dramatis personæ* was kept a profound secret. It was only whispered that Mr. Casey was to play *Macbeth*, and as Mr. Casey was generally looked upon as the rising light of amateur tragedy, everyone felt that the committee had acted wisely in selecting him for the principal part.

When at last the great night arrived, all those responsible for the undertaking's success must have rejoiced at the sight of the goodly audience that flocked in as soon as the doors were opened.

Foremost amongst those to arrive was Mrs. Sullivan; mingled curiosity, and a desire to crush Mrs. Maloney with condescending patronage, had impelled her to come, and as she sailed majestically to the front row, surrounded by her numerous progeny, she reminded one of some portly mediæval saint being borne to heaven on billows of cherubim.

Mrs. Maloney had watched the rapid filling of the house with feelings that mounted higher and higher with each fresh arrival. "Oh, Mr. Nolan!" she exclaimed, while she painfully squinted through a hole in the curtain, "it's a grand thing to have génius! When I look around and see—" But here her tone of serene complacency changed to accents of fury, as she cried, "Bad luck to her! There's that Sullivan woman shuck up in the front row as bowld as brass! Come, begin! She'll see what Mary Maloney can do when she likes!"

And with this awful threat the curtain rose.

As has been said, the exigencies of Mr. Nolan's dramatic resources had compelled him to "cut" a good deal, and consequently when after some glees and solos the curtain again rose, it was upon scene i. act iv., *The Heath*!

It certainly required some stretch of the imagination to persuade ourselves that we were gazing upon the weird home of the Three Sisters; but a few furze bushes in the foreground did a good deal; and an almost religious belief in our programme's printed assurance that it *was* a heath, convinced us of the fact.

However, we were pondering over the possible meaning of a saucer-bath, which was half sunk in the boarding of the stage, when peals of thunder made us forget to be critical in our anxiety to see what was going to happen. There was, moreover, something uncanny in this thunder: the peal, contrary to the usual arrangement, invariably preceded the flash, and in the interval between the two, one seemed to hear the voices of the wild spirits of the storm. I certainly thought I caught one gusty whisper—

"Be aisy with them tay-thrays, can't ye! These devils of matches won't shrike!"

But perhaps it was only fancy.

Suddenly there was a pause in the elemental tumult, then one long shattering peal, and the three witches appeared upon the scene!

They were all dressed alike in plaid petticoats and red cloaks; their features were concealed in black masks, dishevelled locks of cotton-wool waved from beneath their high extinguisher caps, and each carried a large and rugged staff.

Now we knew what the saucer-bath meant! Happy thought! It was the cauldron! And surely enough at this instant slow music struck up behind the scenes, and the three began to prance round it in a kind of diabolical jig. Then green and blue flames shot up from "the charmed pot," and the incantation began. It must sadly be confessed that the witches' delivery of their parts by no means equalled their dancing. It was decidedly difficult to know what they were saying, except one tracked them from line to line in the book; and when one did intercept a sentence, its effect in the peculiar accent of Mowlafeen was rather comic than awe-inspiring. "Hecate" was the next to arrive upon the scene of action. Her appearance was majestic in the extreme. She had a taller hat and a thicker stick than either of her subordinates could boast of; she had also a deep bass voice which reverberated horribly from under her black mask, and was as unintelligible as the milder utterances of the other witches; and, as a special distinction, her entrance was heralded by Locke's fine old music to the song, "Black Spirits and Grey."

Mrs. Maloney, who had apparently identified herself with Hecate's "little airy spirit," led the unseen choir with shrill energy and a determination to have the last of any high note. A little later on in the same scene she proved her value as a coadjutor.

There had come one of those ghastly silences known and dreaded by amateur stage-managers. All the witches' powers of speech seemed paralyzed. The stillness was broken only by the rustle of the prompter's pages as he madly strove to find his place, when suddenly, and at an immeasurable height, the voice of Mrs. Maloney was heard proclaiming—

"Here's the blood of a bat!" in tones which rivalled the death shriek of the animal in question.

Then, while we were still gasping from the effect of this unexpected announcement, Macbeth himself bounded upon the stage, and the house, which had hitherto been too surprised to clap, now gave itself up to enthusiastic applause.

And no wonder! Mr. Casey—for it was indeed he—looked the Scottish hero to perfection; or so, at least, thought the sixpenny back seats. They were enraptured by his appearance, and loudly testified their approval in unlimited stampings and exclamations, such as—

"Glory! look at the fierce eye he have!"

"Musha, Judy, but that's an illigant hat!" &c.

This success of Macbeth's costume can only be considered as a triumph of mind over matter: of Casey over clothes; for the attire which excited the admiration of "the gods" was more original than accurate.

Over his ordinary evening dress the chieftain had draped a selection of ribbons, each of a different plaid. These gave the necessary local colouring. A small tartan shawl was wound round one

shoulder; upon his feet he wore black cloth boots with huge steel buckles, and his hat suggested vague memories of Don C sar de Bazan. If you add to these details the fact that Mr. Casey was short and rather stout, and that his sword had a nasty knack of getting between his legs, you will appreciate the force of dramatic power which carried him over these obstacles, and made of him, at once, a success.

His delivery was simply tremendous. He had an appalling trick of fixing some victim in the audience with his glassy eye; and then he would roll his r's, and stamp his cloth boots, and glare at him, until that wretched one longed for the earth to open and swallow him up, and felt that if they only returned the money at the door he would seek a humiliating refuge in flight.

The scene between the witches and Macbeth went very well until the latter rashly determined to see his fate for himself. Unluckily, however, the "apparitions" he demands to be shown had to be conjured up out of the cauldron, and when the head and shoulders of a well-known young baker appeared above the edge of the bath, there was a general shout of laughter. Moreover, the company being short of "supers," the same actor had to do duty for all the apparitions; and, having appeared and spoken for the first three, he proceeded to bob rapidly up and down eight times to represent "Banquo's line," apparently quite oblivious of the effect his placid face, encircled by the bath-rim, produced on the audience.

Poor Macbeth! It was very hard upon him. His horror-stricken comments were quite lost in the peals of laughter which greeted each reappearance of the baker; and in cries of—

"By the powers! there he is again!" "Oh, Patsy, don't lave us," and other affectionate observations, which continued until the curtain fell upon Macbeth's inaudible vows of vengeance.

When it rose again we found we had been transported to "England," scene iii. act iv. (the fact that it was England had been indicated by the removal of the furze bushes); and Malcolm and Macduff occupied the stage.

Malcolm was a harmless youth, who had evidently backed himself for a large sum to play the part allotted to him in "shortest time on record," the money to be forfeited if he once turned his face to the audience. There was nothing else remarkable about him, and it is probable, I should think, he won his bet.

Macduff was our friend Mr. Nolan. He had placed a most becoming Glengarry cap on one side of his head; further unmistakable proofs of his Scotch extraction were afforded by a plaid scarf and a pebble brooch, and with his pretty fair hair and engaging smile he looked quite charming. He knew his part very well indeed, spoke it slowly and conscientiously, and altogether the scene was a success until the unfortunate arrival of the Doctor.

This unhappy person had been pressed into the service at the eleventh hour, and was a truly pitiable sight from his abject nervousness, and consequent inability to remember his part.

In his terror he forgot that the side scenes, though apparently composed of costly marbles, were only a crafty imitation in wall-paper; and he kept backing up against them, in his efforts to conceal himself from the audience, causing

the whole structure to quiver in a way that made us fear he would really succeed in evading the public gaze by going through the castle walls.

As soon as the Doctor had been safely removed from "the fierce glare that beats upon" an amateur actor, "Ross" appeared and delivered to Macduff his dreadful tidings—

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered —

Mr. Nolan's anguish on receiving this intelligence was really heartrending. He took off his nice Glengarry cap and threw it on the floor. Then he disarranged all his curls with one hand, while with the other he clutched at his heart. (At least I concluded it was his heart, but he seemed to me to aim a good deal lower than that organ generally resides.)

Then he kuelled down, well up to the footlights, and began to choke and pant and sob; Malcolm and Ross meanwhile standing by, and looking on with a fine air of unconcern which plainly said, "Now it's Nolan's turn, we won't interfere till he's finished."

The audience, on the other hand, were very sympathetic; and when, in a climax of emotion, Macduff cried, "What! *all* my pretty chickens?" and dropped his sword with a despairing crash, there was quite a sensation in the front benches; and I heard an impressionable old lady behind me say, "Oh, the poor young man! What a dreadful state he's in!"

With this agitating episode the first part ended, and after a short interval the curtain rose for the last time upon act v. scene i., In Dunsinane Castle. On the stage were discovered "The Doctor," and a Waiting Gentlewoman, whose somewhat bulky appearance and warlike boots betrayed only too plainly the fact that beneath a tartan gown and white apron the costume of a Scottish soldier had been temporarily concealed. Something dreadful was evidently going to happen. The lights had been lowered, "and all the air a solemn stillness held," save where in a remote corner the Doctor and the Gentlewoman maintained a fitful and heavily-prompted conversation in voices attuned to sympathetic quiet by tragic forebodings and stage fright.

Neither to you nor any one; having no witness
To confirm my speech—

The Gentlewoman was murmuring, when a slight noise was heard at the back of the stage, a "practicable" lath and canvas door opened, and Lady Macbeth appeared.

There was an immense sensation in the house as the white-robed figure slowly advanced across the darkened stage and made its way to the front. Who could it be? Mrs. Maloney?—Impossible! We could even now hear her discoursing mysterious music behind the scenes. It was a young lady belonging to the town! It was a professional actress from 'Cork!—from Dublin!—it was—O bathos!—it was the baker!

* * * * *

Yes! it was even so. That invaluable functionary, beside whom Proteus sinks into insignificance, had assumed yet one more character; and having

condensely represented the spirit world, now appeared on earth as the Queen of Tragedy, Lady Macbeth.

This time, however, he trusted not to unassisted genius, nor scorned the adventitious aid of costume. "The trailing garments of the night" hung round him in heavy folds (embarrassing him considerably by their unaccustomed amplitude). Masses of raven hair fell in luxuriant profusion on either side of his rather fat and pendulous cheeks, and his complexion had been reduced to an ashen pallor by the familiar agency of flour.

When he first came on to the stage he carried a small candle, but putting it down upon a table that stood near, he proceeded to rub his hands together with the action of the seductive shopman as he inquires "what the next article might be?"

But alas! the poor baker, in his vigorous fulfilment of the stage directions, had forgotten that the snowy whiteness of his hands was, like that of his face, purely artificial. The more he rubbed, the more the compound of flour and glycerine came off; exposing patches of the original baker of a colour which quite justified Lady Macbeth's horrified exclamations.

The audience had with difficulty restrained the mirth that had possessed them when their old friend had first entered. The curious hoarse whisper which he seemed to consider characteristic of a sonnambulist had also tried their powers of gravity, but they fairly broke down and gave way to shrieks of unfeeling laughter, as the baker, coming right up to the footlights, brandished a large and scarlet paw, from which all vestiges of flour had been removed, and cried in a cracked falsetto—

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten
This little hand. Oh! Oh! Oh!

The uproar which arose after this sentence convinced the baker that it was hopeless to try and finish the scene—true talent was never appreciated by the mocking world—so he turned and prepared to effect a dignified retreat. He swept across the stage; after a short but severe encounter with the "practicable" door he contrived to open it, and was all but safe, when his redundant drapery entangled his feet; he shot like a clown in a pantomime through the aperture and the baker was seen no more.

Lady Macbeth's exit was all that was needed to complete the audience's demoralization.

Horror succeeded horror in grim succession, but they laughed at them all. Macbeth's noble rage and reckless defiance of fate failed to impress them with any reverence for the situation.

When the Doctor came on again, and, terror-stricken, by the Chieftain's jury observed—

Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly bring me here—

a gallery wag chose to believe the audience were the cause of his alarm and called out "Thru for your docthor." The various armies who perambulated the stage were treated with vulgar derision. All that intelligent interest which had distinguished the beginning of the even-

ing was now conspicuous only by its absence. When Macbeth's frantic gesticulations shook his hat off and disclosed a bald and shining scalp just as he came to the inappropriate words—"My fell of hair would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir"—the situation was perhaps slightly comic; but well-regulated minds should sink their sense of the humorous in their admiration of a sublime intention. I feel I cannot too strongly express my disapprobation of those persons who made a jest of Macbeth's decease in consequence of his having first died with his arms and legs extended in the form of an X, and then revived in order to expire more gracefully.

Still, however annoying all this chaff and laughter was at the time, it had the compensating effect of putting the audience into the best of tempers. Every one knows the frame of moral complacency which is induced by the conviction of your own wit; and the affability which generally obtains towards the victim of your facetiousness. The "house" was in precisely this happy state of mind, and when the curtain fell, the fine national faculty for noise was exerted to the utmost.

All the actors were "called," and appeared one by one (though as they had all been pressed into either the Scotch or English armies, there was a certain sameness about the ceremony which deprived it of much of its charm).

Then came the crowning event of the evening.

They called Mrs. Maloney, in her capacity of originator of the whole affair.

She came forward, gracefully leaning on the arm of Mr. Nolan, and while she acknowledged in a supreme courtesy the wild enthusiasm of her fellow-townfolk, she directed a glance of triumph at Mrs. Sullivan.

That injured lady had in vain endeavoured to escape before the hateful apotheosis of "the owld fiddler;" but this concluding insult lent her superhuman strength. Despite the crowd, she arose, collected her cloaks and her children, and fought her way out of the room just as the curtain finally descended upon the brilliant termination of Mrs. Maloney's Amateur Theatricals.

E. CE. S.

MY KATE.

A CHARMING little woman,
With eyes of pretty grey,
That sparkle in the evening
And make it seem like day;
A look so soft and loving,
At once it sealed my fate;
And the owner of this beauty
Is my sweet darling Kate.

They tell me she's not handsome;
But this one thing I know,
You will not find her equal
Wherever you may go.
In thought I'm always with her
From early morn till late,
And everywhere and always
She is my darling Kate.

I long to be a poet,
That this one little strain
Among the songs of England
For ever may remain:

That all the world may listen
While I in verse relate
The countless charms and beauties
Of my sweet darling Kate.

Her hair is bright and golden,
And soft as softest down,
Her forehead is so smooth
She knows not how to frown;
And all she says or does
Is neat, if not ornate;
You ask me, What's perfection?
I answer, 'Tis my Kate.

J. FULLER HIGGS.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WE MUST WAIT AND SEE."

"DEAR SUSIE, DEAR SISTERS,—I am alive; I am coming home. Do not ask me about Kate or Jack; they are drowned with the others. I should have been drowned too, but for Mr. Dilworth; and I should have died afterwards but for him. He has saved me and taken care of me, and now he has married me and is bringing me home.

"It will be good to see you all again, and the old place. I have been very ill. It was so dreadful on the island! I will tell you all about it some time. I am not well now, but Mr. Dilworth takes care of me. He said it was best for us to marry, and then he could bring me home. I never could have got back without him, I know; and oh, how nice it will be to be in Elmdale again! Mr. Dilworth is very good and very clever. You will like him: Jack did. There is so much to say that I cannot write any more. We are coming by the next ship: this is a poor one.

"I send so very much love to you all. I know you never expected to see me again,

"Your loving sister,

"AGNES DILWORTH."

The tears ran down Miss Leake's cheeks as she read the incoherent epistle. "Poor child! dear child!" she repeated to herself; and then with a pause of wonder—"She is married!"

She took up Henry Dilworth's letter, and read that also:—

"MADAM,—Your sister has informed you of our marriage and of the reasons for it. I hope that they will not seem insufficient when you understand them fully. If she has not been able to consult her friends in the choice she has made, the strange circumstances which threw us together must be the explanation.

"I beg you to believe that I would not have persuaded her to take any step which I considered contrary to her welfare; the desolate position in which she found herself made friendly protection, and the care of one who belonged to her, almost a necessity. It is my hope and desire to restore her safely to you. If I can do so, my action in

connecting her life with mine will have its sufficient excuse.

"I am, madam,

"Very respectfully yours,

"HENRY DILWORTH."

This was the letter at which Agnes had arched her eyebrows in surprise; and Miss Leake studied it now in doubt and perplexity.

"It is very formal," she said; "is it a gentleman's letter?"

She repeated this question to her brother Robert when he came over to Elmdale, on the receipt of the happy news; and he answered, "It isn't easy to say. Many men write letters quite unlike themselves. We must wait and see."

"Agnes is so ignorant of the world," Miss Leake observed; "we cannot tell what he may be like. She doesn't say what he is."

"It seems that we have to thank him for having her back at all. Agnes says he saved her life, and therefore I believe he did. Agnes has been brought up to expect a good deal from the world, and she isn't given to exaggerating benefits conferred on her."

"Agnes is very affectionate, and full of feeling," Miss Leake said.

"Yes, for those who do everything for her. If she is grateful to Mr. Dilworth, I think we may consider that we have reason to be grateful too; let us make objections only when we find we cannot help it."

"That is quite true, and very wise," Miss Leake observed; but she found her chief comfort in the careless remark of Agnes: "You will like him: Jack did." She translated this simple phrase into a statement that Mr. Dilworth had been a friend of Mr. Langford's, and she announced the supposed fact freely to her acquaintances. Mr. Dilworth was a fellow-passenger, a friend of her brother-in-law's; he had saved her sister's life, taken care of her, and married her. It was a romantic history. They were full of gratitude to Mr. Dilworth, and anxious to make his acquaintance. So she told all her friends, with the courage of necessity; and she tried to hope that facts would never contradict her apparent satisfaction. In her inmost heart she felt that at least she would have Agnes back again, and she must make the best of any disappointing circumstances which she brought with her. Agnes had been more her child than any of the others; she could not realize that any man should have a superior authority over her, much less a man to whom she had never voluntarily delegated her power. She must wait to see whether he was fit for the happy position which a strange fortune had bestowed on him.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE OLD NEST.

THE first part of the voyage to England was a happy time for Henry Dilworth and his wife. Agnes was full of joy at the thought of seeing her home again, and yet she felt no impatience to reach it. The close attendance of her husband, and the kindness of all about her, made a satisfactory present, from which it was pleasant to look forward to a delightful future.

Henry Dilworth was regarded as somewhat of a hero by those around her, who knew the story of the wreck, and Agnes was proud of belonging to him—proud also of her power over him. Then she had the pleasure of perceiving that he actually looked up to her and deferred to her judgment in many particulars; and this was a novelty to her. At this time they were indeed completely satisfied with each other and with their marriage. She perceived no faults in his manners, except such as she could laugh at, and he found nothing wanting in her affection for him.

But bad weather brought a return of illness, and Agnes landed in England in a weak and exhausted condition. The railway journey homewards was delayed for a couple of days to give her resting time where they first went ashore; and when at last the travellers reached the station nearest to Elmdale, no one was there to meet them; an empty carriage only had been sent at Henry Dilworth's request, for he was anxious to save his wife from all excitement until she should be actually at home, where she could rest and recover her strength.

Her first entrance to the familiar valley was, therefore, made in his company alone; his hand clasped hers caressingly, and he watched the changes in her face instead of the scenes through which they drove. She thought herself a happy woman to be returning in his care, and the pleasure of the moment was not spoiled by any doubt about his complete satisfactoriness.

As they drove along the lanes they met a couple of equestrians, who recognized Agnes as they passed by; and the impression produced on these old acquaintances was in one respect just what Agnes expected.

"That was Agnes Leake, I declare," one of them said to the other, "and her husband, I suppose. What a very handsome man! I wonder who he is; no one seems to know."

But Agnes only imagined the admiration, not the suspicious curiosity.

When at last the Stepping Stones were reached, and Henry Dilworth carried his wife into the little drawing-room she knew so well, there was no thought on the part of those awaiting her of formal introduction, or of criticizing observation, with regard to the stranger who came as her husband. There was for a moment only a tumult of welcome, of wonder, of incredulous delight, of pitying anxiety.

Agnes was kissed, and caressed, and compassionate, while she clung to her husband's hand—her safeguard and refuge in this storm of excitement, as it had been in real dangers, and smiled at her sisters and cried a little and laughed a good deal.

Then her husband interfered with quiet authority, and begged that she might go to her own room and rest. Miss Leake looked at him with a desire to be just, a conscientious anxiety not to feel unfriendly. It was hard to recognize at this moment his superior claim on her darling, to acknowledge that he could give the best help and had the best right to give it.

But she yielded without hesitation. It was evident that Agnes had learnt to rely upon him, and that she was happy in his care. Therefore Miss Leake carried out his suggestions with that

self-effacing obedience which is characteristic of competency when it waives its authority for a time. She had expected that her own personal attendance would be required by the invalid, she could nurse her sister so much better than Mr. Dilworth, "a man," as she would have contemptuously said; but Agnes had so long been dependent upon her husband for every sort of care, that it was evident he could best give it to her now. Any alteration in her habits would be disturbing and exciting; her husband's presence seemed necessary to her rest; the sound of his voice seemed to impel her to quietness and obedience.

So, for the first time in her life, Miss Leake found herself shut out of her sister's sick room, for the first time knew that her presence was not necessary, was actually troublesome; and was compelled to perceive that some one else more than filled her place, and was helpful to Agnes in a degree which she had never reached.

She said to herself with some impatience that it was the extravagant affection of newly-married people which made the difference, and she waited for her turn to come again, waited and watched ready for her opportunity. She did not know that there was something in the larger and more generous nature of Henry Dilworth which was at the same time soothing and inspiriting to his wife. Agnes did not understand it herself, but through her husband's mind she had glimpses of the world and of life from a higher point of view than had been open to her in the household at the Stepping Stones; she perceived dimly that her husband's goodness to her did not arise from her own intrinsic importance, but from his large generosity. It seemed possible at this time that her love of him might lift her easily into a higher atmosphere; and that her disposition to yield quietly to protective influences, and to take the tone of those around her, might lead her gently and unconsciously into a state of mind prepared for satisfaction with the life that he could give her.

But Miss Leake waited, like one who has yielded a property reluctantly, and who is ready to find a flaw in the title-deeds of the possessor. She made no foolish and futile protests, but she could not believe in the permanency of her compulsory abdication. It seemed at this moment too complete to be natural. The marriage she had dreamt of for Agnes was not of this class. The husband she had imagined would have given to her sister an occupation and social importance, and he would have been master (of course) in his own house; but he would not have supplanted her in her sister's heart. Agnes would have still come to her for help and advice in the multitude of departments with which a man has nothing to do; she might even have demanded her sympathy in troubles which a man cannot understand. But this marriage seemed to shut her altogether out of her sister's life: Agnes looked at her, laughing, from the gates of Paradise, then closed the door and went inside.

And was not this Paradise, possibly, vulgar and a mistake? Had not her own influence gone because it was incompatible with the influence of Henry Dilworth? Had he not absorbed her share in the life of Agnes because the young wife's confidential trust could not be divided between her

husband and her sister—because they belonged to different classes, and could not reign in the same sphere or the same life?

The impression produced on the family circle by Henry Dilworth in the first hurried interview was that of a handsome man, with quiet manners, rather oddly dressed. But that might be explained by the absence of opportunity for getting good clothes after the shipwreck. He had been evidently absorbed in anxiety about his wife; and had thought of no one else at the moment. This was a point in his favour, but it had prevented the occurrence of opportunities for criticism.

"Poor child! how ill she looks!" was the first natural exclamation of the sisters, when the Dilworths had disappeared into their own room.

Then some one said suggestively: "A very fine-looking man!"

"I like his manner very much," said Robert Leake with decision.

"Nothing could be kinder or more considerate," said Miss Leake with a little sigh.

When Henry Dilworth came out of his wife's room he found his sister-in-law hovering anxiously and silently about the landing.

"She is asleep now," he said in a low voice; "perhaps you would like to go in and sit with her. I thought of turning out for a stroll if you would."

"I shall be very glad; but you must have some lunch."

"I would rather not; I want nothing. Just a turn or two outside before she wakes, and then I'll come back."

"Then my brother will go with you; he is waiting downstairs to see you."

Miss Leake felt perhaps some desire that the family should not give up all charge of this new member of it until they had discovered what manner of man he might be. She was anxious to be politely attentive, and anxious also to join her young sister; therefore she was glad to hand Henry Dilworth over to the care of her brother. Her pretty little hall and old-fashioned staircase looked dwarfed in the presence of this man from the colonies, whose easy movements as well as his massive limbs gave an impression of out-door life. They were not without training certainly, but it was not a training which qualified him to feel at home in an elegantly furnished cottage residence, where maiden ladies lead an existence of modest but luxurious refinement.

Miss Leake felt that she would not quite know what to do with this brother-in-law of hers. There was a difference between them, undoubtedly; but it was not yet obvious who had the advantage in this difference.

Henry Dilworth had already received an impression of being shut up in a gilded cage. The elaborateness of the decorations and the abundance of ornament in the low but pretty rooms subdued him with a sense of the necessity of very measured and careful movement. Also the presence of so many persons in a space already well occupied by the furniture, their eager attentions, the lavish caresses they had bestowed on Agnes, all so full of feeling, and yet under the control of some law which he did not quite understand, gave him the idea of being in a new world, where his standard of manners must be readjusted. He wanted to get out into the fresh air, to stretch

his limbs and expand his thoughts under the free and universal heaven.

But he was not so to escape. The privilege of belonging to such a household as Miss Leake's could not be held with impunity. He had not learnt the pass-words which would have given him a freedom of action in society, and he must consequently be content to be held in close bondage.

Robert Leake, his wife's elder brother, was waiting for him downstairs; not, indeed, with any idea of being a constraint upon him, but only wishing to show him politeness, and to learn something of himself and his position.

"Are you going out for a stroll?" he said. "I will go with you."

They walked along the road together, and for a time neither spoke. Henry Dilworth had nothing to say: he was inclined to be quiet, and to take in new impressions.

Robert Leake asked him a few questions concerning the day's journey, which he answered briefly and to the point.

When they reached a curve of the road and turned back towards the house (with a mutual feeling that they must be within call), Henry Dilworth looked at the river and the road with the cottage nestling back among the trees against the hillside, and said, "She has often described it to me."

It was the first spontaneous utterance of his own impressions that he had made since his arrival, and Robert Leake looked at him with polite curiosity.

"She was always a home-bird. We must be grateful to you for bringing her back to the nest. She tells us you did everything for her," he remarked.

"It was nothing. I could do no less."

"You saved her life however. There is no doubt about that, I suppose;" and then he hesitated. "We were all surprised to hear of her marriage."

Henry Dilworth's countenance changed at once from quiet contemplation to active attention.

"It was a difficult question to decide," he said; "she was absolutely alone, and very ill. I hope you will none of you feel that she was sacrificed."

"We have certainly no reason to think so," her brother answered cordially.

"There was no alternative of waiting and consulting her friends. If that had been possible the marriage itself would have seemed out of the question. She wanted help and care *then*."

"I don't quite understand. You mean that you married her?"

"That I might be able to take care of her."

"And for yourself, on your own account, you would not have thought of it?"

Henry Dilworth's face flushed, and he met the half-withdrawn glance of the other with a full look.

"No, I should never have thought of it. I do not mean that your sister was not lovable. But I should not have presumed to love her, or at least to find out that I did."

"I understand, perfectly. You tried to decide according to *her* interest?"

"I tried to do it. I hope you will none of you think that I made a mistake. I see that there is a difference between us. Such differences never concerned me before. My life has had little to do

with them. I have attended to my work and not troubled about other things. But I see that there is a difference, and I remember now that her sister thought so. I did not notice at the time—there was no need."

"Her sister—Kate?"

"Yes; Mrs. Langford."

"Kate was young, poor girl, and full of fancies. And Jack Langford?"

"He was a very good friend of mine. I promised him to take care of his sister-in-law; just before the wreck took place, when it seemed possible."

Mr. Leake was silent for a time, meditating. At last he said—

"I should like to understand your feeling clearly. You mean that you are not of our class?"

"My mother was a servant-girl before she married my father. He was a blacksmith."

"You say *was*. Then they are not alive?"

"No. I haven't any relations to introduce to my wife whom you wouldn't like her to know. I am alone in the world."

"Then, my dear fellow," said Mr. Leake cheerfully, "I don't see that it matters what you were, so long as she is satisfied with what you are. She is only a girl, as Kate was, and full of fancies; so that she mightn't have liked— In short, if you had had relatives not equal to yourself in education and so on they mightn't have pulled together. But things are straightforward enough now. Money matters are comparatively easy to settle; they can always be arranged when a man has capacity. I am not anxious about that. We shall find something in time."

"Do you mean that you suppose I am poor, or that I have no employment?"

"I don't know, of course. But there's my sister's little fortune—not much, but enough to secure comfort to her for her lifetime. That would have been settled upon her in case of an ordinary marriage. I was thinking that perhaps you will consent for it to be done now?"

"By all means," Henry Dilworth answered quickly. "I didn't know that she had anything; she never told me. I should like to add something to it—whatever you think necessary," he went on, with a flushed face. "I am not poor; I have had more than I needed for many years, and money grows. I don't want it myself, except that I should like to keep a thousand, or perhaps two, in reserve, to carry out some ideas, if necessary. But I could find from eight to ten thousand and do that still, without touching the sheep-farm. I must explain to you the investments."

"I appreciate your generosity," said Mr. Leake warmly, and wondering more than ever at the unexpected sort of husband which his sweet young sister had brought home with her. "My sister's fortune is something like three hundred a-year; if you could make that into five or six we should feel that she was satisfactorily provided for."

They had approached the garden-gate, and perceived the anxious face of Miss Leake looking out for them.

"Agnes is awake, and asking for you," she said almost reproachfully; and Henry Dilworth went at once to his wife.

(To be continued.)

SWEET MOMENTS.

BY HARRIET KENDALL.

A WAVE of gold as daylight gently dips
Below the west where twilight shyly stands;
The soft, caressing touch of baby lips,
The tender-tightening clasp of baby hands.

A swan enmirrored in a limpid lake,
Kissing a golden-hearted lily there;
A throstle's message rippling thro' the brake,
Where breeze-blown buds and foamy blossoms pair.

A summer glow upon a rose's cheek,
A faint fair dawn like maiden blush let free;
A silence upon hearts too full to speak,
A flower-tongued silence answering you and me.

Love inarticulate, with languaged eyes,
Looking soft vows beyond all word's decree;
Souls married in an interchange of sighs,
Hearts oped for love's responsibility.

The dell-born ecstasy of waking flowers,
The mountain gladness of winds wild-tost;
Thoughts fed, in love's enlightened, magic hours,
On hopes that yield full twice of all they cost.

Sweet pastime summing up two lives grown rich;
Sweet, drowsy joy; deep, taintless happiness;
Sweet idling; kiss-filled pauses, to bewitch
Love's aimless aims whose goal we dimly guess.

Sweet as blown hedge-blooms falling leaf on leaf
With soft enticement, faintly crimsoning;
Sweet as the harebell-light, too brightly brief,
That floods the April skies when birds take wing.

How higher than all heights beyond, afar!
How sweeter than all sweets is this love-spell!
And yet, if you were less of all you are,
I needs must surely love you then less well.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

ON EATING AND DRINKING.

I ALWAYS was fond of eating and drinking, even as a child—especially eating, in those early days. I had an appetite then, also a digestion. I remember a dull-eyed, livid-complexioned gentleman coming to dine at our house once. He watched me eating for about five minutes, quite fascinated, seemingly, and then he turned to my father, with: "Does your boy ever suffer from dyspepsia?"

"I never heard him complain of anything of that kind," replied my father. "Do you ever suffer from dyspepsia, Collywobbles?" (They called me Collywobbles, but it was not my real name).

"No, pa," I answered. After which, I added, "What is dyspepsia, pa?"

My livid-complexioned friend regarded me with a look of mingled amazement and envy. Then in a tone of infinite pity he slowly said, "You will know—some day."

My poor, dear mother used to say she liked to see me eat, and it has always been a pleasant reflection to me, since, that I must have given her much gratification in that direction. A growing, healthy lad, taking plenty of exercise, and careful to restrain himself from indulging in too much study, can generally satisfy the most exacting expectations as regards his feeding powers.

It is amusing to see boys eat, when you have not got to pay for it. Their idea of a square meal is a pound and a half of roast beef with five or six good sized potatoes (soapy ones preferred, as being more substantial), plenty of greens, and four thick slices of Yorkshire pudding, followed by a couple of currant dumplings, a few green apples, a pen'orth of nuts, half-a-dozen jumbles, and a bottle of ginger beer. After that, they play at horses.

How they must despise us men, who require to sit quiet for a couple of hours after dining off a spoonful of clear soup and the wing of a chicken.

But the boys have not all the advantages on their side. A boy never enjoys the luxury of being satisfied. A boy never feels full. He can never stretch out his legs, put his hands behind his head, and, closing his eyes, sink into the ethereal blissfulness that encompasses the well-dined man. A dinner makes no difference whatever to a boy. To a man, it is as a good fairy's potion, and, after it, the world appears a brighter and a better place. A man who has dined satisfactorily experiences a yearning love towards all his fellow creatures. He strokes the cat quite gently, and calls it "poor pussy," in tones full of the tenderest emotion. He sympathises with the members of the German band outside, and wonders if they are cold; and, for the moment, he does not even hate his wife's relations.

A good dinner brings out all the softer side of a man. Under its genial influence the gloomy and morose become jovial and chatty. Sour, starchy individuals, who all the rest of the day go about looking as if they lived on vinegar and Epsom salts, break out into wreathed smiles after dinner, and exhibit a tendency to pat small children on the head, and to talk to them—vaguely—about sixpences. Serious young men thaw, and become mildly cheerful; and snobbish young men, of the heavy moustache type, forget to make themselves objectionable.

I always feel sentimental myself after dinner. It is the only time when I can properly appreciate love stories. Then, when the hero clasps "her" to his heart in one last wild embrace, and stifles a sob, I feel as sad as though I had dealt at whist, and turned up only a deuce; and, when the heroine dies in the end, I weep. If I read the same tale early in the morning, I should sneer at it. Digestion, or rather indigestion, has a marvellous effect upon the heart. If I want to write anything very pathetic—I mean, if I want to try to write anything very pathetic—I eat a large plateful of hot buttered muffins about an hour beforehand, and, then, by the time I sit down to my work, a feeling of unutterable melancholy has come over me. I picture heart-broken lovers parting for ever at lonely wayside stiles, while

the sad twilight deepens around them, and only the tinkling of a distant sheep bell breaks the sorrow-laden silence. Old men sit and gaze at withered flowers till their sight is dimmed by the mist of tears. Little dainty maidens wait and watch at open casements; but, "he cometh not," and the heavy years roll by, and the sunny gold tresses wear white and thin. The babies that they dandled have become grown men and women with podgy torments of their own, and the playmates that they laughed with are lying very silent under the waving grass. But still they wait and watch, till the dark shadows of the unknown night steal up and gather round them, and the world with its childish troubles fades from their aching eyes.

I see pale corpses tossed on white-foamed waves, and death-beds stained with bitter tears, and graves in trackless deserts. I hear the wild wailing of women, the low moaning of the little children, the dry sobbing of strong men. It's all the muffins. I could not conjure up one melancholy fancy upon a mutton chop and a glass of champagne.

A full stomach is a great aid to poetry, and, indeed, no sentiment of any kind can stand upon an empty one. We have not time or inclination to indulge in fanciful troubles, until we have got rid of our real misfortunes. We do not sigh over dead dicky-birds with the bailiffs in the house; and, when we do not know where on earth to get our next shilling from, we do not worry as to whether our mistress's smiles are cold, or hot, or lukewarm, or anything else about them.

Foolish people—when I say "foolish people" in this contemptuous way, I mean people who entertain different opinions to mine. If there is one person I do despise more than another, it is the man who does not think exactly the same on all topics as I do. Foolish people, I say, then, who have never experienced much of either, will tell you that mental distress is far more agonizing than bodily. Romantic and touching theory! so comforting to the love-sick young sprig who looks down patronizingly at some poor devil with a white starved face, and thinks to himself, "Ah, how happy you are compared with me;" so soothing to fat old gentlemen who cackle about the superiority of poverty over riches. But it is all nonsense—all cant. An aching head soon makes one forget an aching heart. A broken finger will drive away all recollections of an empty chair. And when a man feels really hungry, he does not feel anything else.

We sleek, well-fed folk can hardly realize what feeling hungry is like. We know what it is to have no appetite, and not to care for the dainty victuals placed before us, but we do not understand what it means to sicken for food—to die for bread while others waste it—to gaze with famished eyes upon coarse fare steaming behind dingy windows, longing for a pen'orth of pease pudding, and not having the penny to buy it—to feel that a crust would be delicious, and that a bone would be a banquet.

Hunger is a luxury to us, a piquant, flavour-giving sauce. It is well worth while to get hungry and thirsty merely to discover how much gratification can be obtained from eating and drinking. If you wish to thoroughly enjoy your dinner, take a thirty-mile country walk after breakfast, and don't

touch anything till you get back. How your eyes will glisten at sight of the white table-cloth and steaming dishes then! With what a sigh of content you will put down the empty beer tankard, and take up your knife and fork! And how comfortable you feel afterwards, as you push back your chair, light a cigar, and beam round upon everybody.

Make sure, however, when adopting this plan, that the good dinner is really to be had at the end, or the disappointment is trying. I remember once a friend and I—dear old Jim, it was. Ah! how we lose one another in life's mist. It must be eight years since I last saw James Taboys. How pleasant it would be to meet his jovial face again, to clasp his strong hand, and to hear his cheery laugh once more. He owes me fourteen shillings, too. Well, we were on a holiday together, and one morning we had breakfast early, and started for a tremendous long walk. We, over-night, had ordered a duck for dinner. We said, "Get a big one, because we shall come home awfully hungry;" and, as we were going out, our landlady came up in great spirits. She said, "I have got you gentlemen a duck, if you like. If you get through that, you'll do well;" and she held up a bird about the size of a doormat. We cknuckled at the sight, and said we would try. We said it with self-conscious pride, like men who know their own power. Then we started.

We lost our way, of course. I always do in the country, and it does make me so wild, because it is no use asking direction of any of the people you meet. One might as well inquire of a lodging-house slavey the way to make beds, as expect a country bumpkin to know the road to the next village. You have to shout the question about three times, before the sound of your voice penetrates his skull. At the third time, he slowly raises his head, and stares blankly at you. You yell it at him then for a fourth time, and he repeats it after you. He ponders while you could count a couple of hundred, after which, speaking at the rate of three words a minute, he fancies you "couldn't do better than——" Here he catches sight of another idiot coming down the road, and bawls out to him the particulars, requesting his advice. The two then argue the case for a quarter of an hour or so, and finally agree that you had better go straight down the lane, round to the right, and cross by the third stile, and keep to the left by old Jimmy Milcher's cow-shed, and across the seven-acre field, and through the gate by Squire Grubbin's hay-stack, keeping the bridle path for a while, till you come opposite the hill where the windmill used to be—but its gone now—and round to the right, leaving Stiggins's plantation behind you; and you say "thank you," and go away with a splitting headache, but without the faintest notion of your way, the only clear idea you have on the subject being that somewhere or other there is a stile which has to be got over; and, at the next turn, you come upon four stiles, all leading in different directions!

We had undergone this ordeal two or three times. We had tramped over fields. We had waded through brooks, and scrambled over hedges and walls. We had had a row as to whose fault it was that we had first lost our way. We had got thoroughly disagreeable, footsore, and wear-

But, throughout it all, the hope of that duck kept us up. A fairy-like vision, it floated before our tired eyes, and drew us onward. The thought of it was as a trumpet call to the fainting. We talked of it, and cheered each other with our recollections of it. "Come along," we said, "the duck will be spoilt."

We felt a strong temptation, at one point, to turn into a village inn we passed, and have a cheese and a few loaves between us; but we heroically restrained ourselves: we should enjoy the duck all the better for being famished.

We fancied we smelt it when we got into the town, and did the last quarter of a mile in three minutes. We rushed upstairs, and washed ourselves, and changed our clothes, and came down, and pulled our chairs up to the table, and sat and rubbed our hands while the landlady removed the covers, when I seized the knife and fork and started to carve.

It seemed to want a lot of carving. I struggled with it for about five minutes without making the slightest impression, and then Jim, who had been eating potatoes, wanted to know if it wouldn't be better for some one to do the job that understood carving. I took no notice of his foolish remark, but attacked the bird again; and so vigorously this time, that the animal left the dish, and took refuge in the fender.

We soon had it out of that though, and I was prepared to make another effort. But Jim was getting unpleasant. He said that if he had thought we were to have a game of blind hockey with the dinner, he would have got a bit of bread and cheese outside.

I was too exhausted to argue. I laid down the knife and fork with dignity, and took a side seat; and Jim went for the wretched creature. He worked away in silence for awhile, and then he muttered, "Damn the duck," and took his coat off.

We did break the thing up at length, with the aid of a chisel; but it was perfectly impossible to eat it, and we had to make a dinner off the vegetables and an apple tart. We tried a mouthful of the duck, but it was like eating indiarubber.

It was a wicked sin to kill that drake. But there! there's no respect for old institutions in this country.

I started this paper with the idea of writing about eating and drinking, but I seem to have confined my remarks entirely to eating as yet. Well, you see, drinking is one of those subjects with which it is unadvisable to appear too well acquainted. The days are gone by when it was considered manly to go to bed intoxicated every night, and a clear head and a firm hand no longer draw down upon their owner the reproach of effeminacy. On the contrary, in these sadly degenerate days, an evil smelling breath, a blotchy face, a reeling gait, and a husky voice are regarded as the hall-marks of the cad rather than of the gentleman.

Even now-a-days, though, the thirstiness of mankind is something supernatural. We are for ever drinking on one excuse or another. A man never feels comfortable unless he has a glass before him. We drink before meals, and with meals, and after meals. We drink when we meet a friend, also when we part from a friend. We drink when we are talking, when we are reading,

and when we are thinking. We drink one another's healths, and spoil our own. We drink the Queen, and the Army, and the Ladies, and everybody else that is drinkable; and, I believe, if the supply ran short, we should drink our mothers-in-law.

By-the-way, we never eat anybody's health, always *drink* it. Why should we not stand up now and then and eat a tart to somebody's success?

To me, I confess, the constant necessity of drinking, under which the majority of men labour, is quite unaccountable. I can understand people drinking to drown care, or to drive away maddening thoughts, well enough. I can understand the ignorant masses loving to soak themselves in drink—oh, yes, it's very shocking that they should, of course—very shocking to us who live in cosy homes, with all the graces and pleasures of life around us, that the dwellers in damp cellars and windy attics should creep from their dens of misery into the warmth and glare of the public-house bar, and seek to float for a brief space away from their dull world upon a Lethe stream of gin.

But think, before you hold up your hands in horror at their ill-living, what "life" for these wretched creatures really means. Picture the squalid misery of their brutish existence, dragged on from year to year in the narrow, noisome room where, huddled like vermin in sewers, they welter, and sicken, and sleep; where dirt-grimed children scream and fight, and sluttish, shrill-voiced women cuff, and curse, and nag; where the street outside teems with roaring filth, and the house around is a Bedlam of riot and stench.

Think what a sapless stick this fair flower of life must be to them, devoid of mind and soul. The horse in his stall scent the sweet hay, and munches the ripe corn contentedly. The watchdog in his kennel blinks at the grateful sun, dreams of a glorious chase over the dewy fields, and wakes with a yelp of gladness to greet a caressing hand. But the clod-like life of these human logs never knows one ray of light. From the hour when they crawl from their comfortless bed to the hour when they lunge back into it again, they never live one moment of real life. Recreation, amusement, companionship, they know not the meaning of. Joy, sorrow, laughter, tears, love, friendship, longing, despair, are idle words to them. From the day when their baby eyes first look out upon their sordid world to the day when, with an oath, they close them for ever, and their bones are shovelled out of sight, they never warm to one touch of human sympathy, never thrill to a single thought, never start to a single hope.

Can we wonder that they pour the maddening liquor down their throats, and feel for one brief moment that they live?

Ah, we may talk sentiment as much as we like, but the stomach is the real seat of happiness in this world. The kitchen is the chief temple wherein we worship, its roaring fire is our vestal flame, and the cook is our great high-priest. He is a mighty magician and a kindly one. He soothes away all sorrow and care. He drives forth all enmity, gladdens all love. Our God is great, and the cook is his prophet. Let us eat, drink, and be merry.

JEROME K. JEROME.

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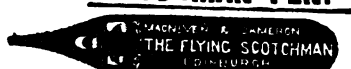
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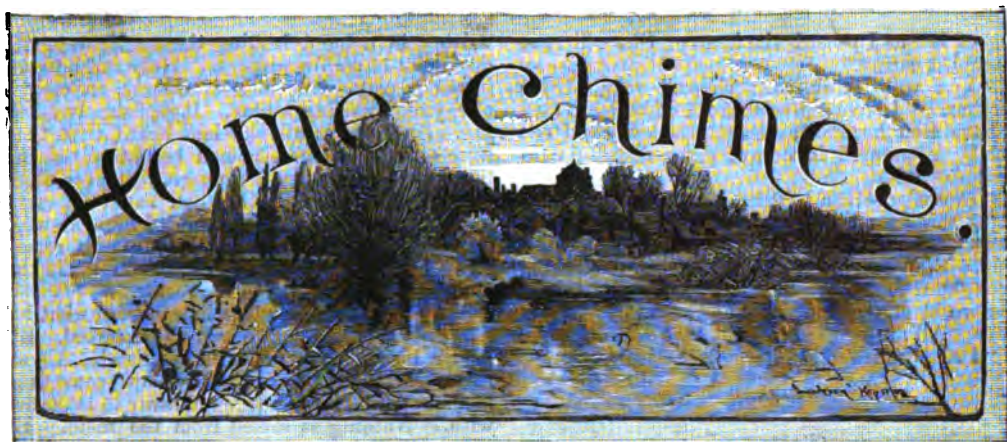
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LOVE AND FAITH.

BY EDWIN WHELPTON.

CHAPTER I.

HOMR.

THE rectory, the church, the farmhouse—George Tustin could have thrown a cricket-ball from one extremity to the other.

He thought so, as he turned a sharp angle of the road, driving from the rural railway-station. How beautiful it looked, the red rectory, the yellow church, the arcade of trees, the white farmhouse, low hills to the right, on the left a fir plantation skirting the straight line of railway on the plain.

"A rainbow, Joseph," murmured George.

"A very pretty one, sir."

"Are they not all pretty, Joseph?"

"Well, yessir, daresay they are," returned Joseph confusedly, as if caught in a trap, his thumbs working in and out the waterproof.

Beyond the village, the vault of heaven was densely blue, one end of the arch apparently resting on the tip of the precipitous hill, the other fading gradually into the whiter sky. There was a suspicion of sunshine and a suggestion of a shower past.

Just before the trap turned a second angle George caught sight of a tall, spare figure on the rectory lawn. It was his father on the look-out, shading his eyes with his hand. He hurriedly turned as if to enter the house; perhaps he shouted, for quickly a stout, matronly figure joined him. The rector and his wife had but one excitement.

George smiled pleasurably. He wondered if he was worth so much attachment; wondered how it would have been with his parents had he never existed.

"There is no longer a doubt, Joseph; it is almost a wonder my father did not come to meet me."

"The master's been delicate, sir. He's afraid of chills, sir."

"Ah, true, Joseph. How odd it is," murmured George, "to reach the house and the village behind, we describe three sides of a square."

"Yessir," agreed Joseph, not comprehending the least bit.

"Now, had the road been cut like the railway, we should have reached the rectory in a little over a third of the time."

"Yessir," agreed Joseph, comprehending perfectly, chaos resolved.

George pulled up, and Joseph alighted to open a gate. When the servant had climbed in, George touched up the horse, and they were bounding along through the farm home-field. Joseph had to alight again to open a second gate, and George, the horse walking, looked at the gable of the farmhouse, and his thoughts went back to his boyhood. Julia Cannon would no longer be a child. What a sylph she was! People said that she would never be handsome like her mother. George had thought this very unkind. The coming generation cannot help it if they are deficient or the race deteriorating. He himself had not thought Julia handsome of face, but he had always believed her good—her frank manner and guileless lips were convincing. That she would live to be beautiful, George was certain. But Joseph was opening the rectory gate, and it was necessary that the driver should have his wits about him; the avenue was circuitous—planned for the sake of effect and to spare noble trees.

"Welcome home, George! Never mind your traps, my boy; Joseph will bring all in."

But George was persistent; a small case at his feet, he appeared to be choice over.

"How odd," murmured Mrs. Tustin, "Julia Cannon returned home this morning."

"Did she?" ejaculated George with interest, "it seems an age since I saw her. I was think-

ing of her as I passed the house, She will have altered, I expect."

"You will think so perhaps," rejoined his mother. "I have not seen much of her, but still I have seen her now and again. Poor child she has been immured in one of those dreadful convents."

"Does she return to it?" asked George.

"I think not," replied Mrs. Tustin. "Cannon is very fond of the girl. He has been beside himself with delight these last few days with the thought of her return home for good. He thinks the world of the girl, his wife's heart is in her boys. All are away now."

"I see," murmured George reflectively.

CHAPTER II.

AN INQUIRING MIND.

"You are very choice of that case, George, what have you in it? Is it a writing case?"

"It is a receptacle for written matter."

"What writing can you have to do now?"

"It is not task-work, mother. I may say an amusement."

"My dear, you are too curious," remonstrated the rector, seeing George disinclined to make any one a confidant, and yet hard put to, to maintain his reserve, a diffident flush on his cheek.

Mrs. Tustin was very unstrung that George should be so reticent. Was she not his mother, had she not a right to know? She would not rest until she did know. She couldn't.

Mrs. Tustin was intensely inquisitive. It was a failing with her. Wherever she went she was devoured with curiosity. Where she was Lady Bountiful, all her questions were perforce answered. Occasionally she met with rebuffs. Mrs. Cannon never spared her. Mrs. Cannon was always armed to the teeth. She was as intensely shrewd as Mrs. Tustin was intensely curious. She could pump Mrs. Tustin dry with ease, but when Mrs. Tustin took her turn, nothing came up, and Mrs. Tustin often departed with a "flea in her ear." Without being deadly enemies, the two women never assimilated. Mrs. Tustin had an impression that Mrs. Cannon ridiculed her; Mrs. Cannon chuckled without concealment that Mrs. Tustin should have wit sufficient to discern so much.

Mrs. Tustin noticed that George took the mysterious case to his bedroom. She paid many visits there, but she invariably found it secure. One journey when she felt safe she tried her keys, but no one fitted. Had she pleaded privately, George would not have been adamant, the fear of being laughed at had most to do with his precaution. Success to her who waits! George had decided upon a walk to the hill-top; he would like to hear of his boy friends, the young Hacketts. Mrs. Tustin proceeded to his room. Joy of joys! the case was open. For once, George was careless.

Mrs. Tustin saw quarto paper—after all it was nothing. He was practising composition—sermons. She moved the case round, and read a little. She was much mystified. She removed the paper from the case, so that she could turn over the pages. There was much interlineation, much crossing out, memoranda here and there

written in a hand leaning the wrong way, as if dissimilar of *malice prepense*. Horror of horrors! it was a play. The idea of George, an embryo clergyman, writing a play. It was simply shocking. She saw it all, she had heard that there were sets in colleges, he had been received in a profane one. Wherever you go, there are objectionable people. And they had had such glowing accounts of him, he was placed high, he was a classical scholar. Poor boy, he must be remonstrated with. "Much learning doth make thee mad." She must talk to the rector.

The Reverend Denys Tustin wondered what had happened, his wife's face was so perturbed. She held a bulky lot of paper in her hand. Ah, she had unearthed a mass of old sermons some sacrilegious maidservant had stowed away to make fires with. Nothing is sacred from the maid. His wife had a light turnover on her shoulders; in her hurry it had become displaced. The one-handed movement replacing it had something suggestive in it. The judge sets his wig straight before his lips part.

"Denys, you must speak to George."

"I have spoken to him, dear."

"Remonstrate with him then!" said she, acidly irritable. "I could not rest until I knew what was in that case. I had a premonition that something was wrong if I could not see inside it. I don't wonder at his secrecy."

"Have you forced it?" inquired her husband anxiously.

"No," answered she, to the rector's great relief. "For once, George has forgotten to lock it. I thought it just possible he might be entangled—"

"Well, is he?" demanded the rector, not giving his wife time to achieve an effect.

"I don't know; he may be. After what I have discovered, I can imagine anything. Ah! most reprehensible for a young man about to take Orders."

"What is it?" whispered the rector, his voice failing him in his agitation.

"A play!" said Mrs. Tustin tragically.

"A play?" echoed the rector at sea.

"A play," repeated Mrs. Tustin; "he is writing a horrid play."

"Well, well," contested the rector relieved, "there is nothing criminal or culpable writing a play. Even if he is, it will be simply for his own delectation. The chances are nine hundred to one that it will be acted, a thousand to one that it will be printed. Moreover, some men became famous through writing plays—Shakespeare, Goldsmith, Sheridan—"

"All disreputable men."

"Then there was Hannah More, a favourite of yours—"

"I never read any written by her. She would regret her indiscretions in her old age."

"I'm sure I don't know, it would be deemed a matter of regret were we to be deprived now of our dramatists. Æschylus—"

"Look at it," interrupted Mrs. Tustin, as if holding pitch, "it is frivolous, it is absurd."

"No," said the rector, closing his eyes, turning his head and holding up his hand, the fingers separate, "I will not take an unfair advantage of George, nor shall I ask him a question. If he bring the play to me, I will read it. If I think

it good, I will not condemn, even if I think a future clergyman's mind should be set in another direction."

"I shall talk to him."

"Don't, Amelia," pleaded her husband, "be advised by me, take it back and place it as you found it, so that he may suspect nothing. Breathe not a word of the knowledge you have gained, if you wish to retain unimpaired his respect and affection. I tremble if he discover that you have been prying. We men, my dear, resent people, especially women, challenging our fads and hobbies."

Mrs. Tustin was astonished. Her husband generally deferred to her, he was not one to contradict her, or say her nay. He made his escape when he found it difficult to agree with her. On such occasions she was fully conscious that chasing him would be an unwise proceeding—like the rat, cornered, he might assert himself. Mrs. Cannon once had the hardihood to declare—and to her face—that she twisted the rector round her little finger. Mrs. Tustin was aware that Mrs. Cannon was not wide of the mark, and did not contradict the assertion, but she was a little affronted, truth is not always pleasant when it trenches on domestic relations. Now, she did not combat her husband's opinion, the notion that it was possible for him to make "a stand" occurred to her.

For a moment she looked obstinate, her eyes furtive and contracting, then she appeared panic-stricken. George might return any moment. Hurrying out of the room, she hastened to restore the MS. to its place.

CHAPTER III.

A MATADOR.

By the highway, it was a roundabout route to the Hacketts' house, the road dævious, level bits utilized to afford relief to animals breasting the hill. The view from the summit was splendid, one looked over a diversified plain to the cliff range. With a glass, vehicles could be seen on the old Roman road. But there was a short cut through cottagers' paddocks at the foot of the hill, and across an extensive area of grass that without division reached the farm house. Halfway, a clump of firs and broken precipitous ground about them remained, relics and a feature of the old time when the hill-side, mile after mile, was considered waste.

George Tustin was warm before he reached the firs.

"Talk about the country being flat," he soliloquized, "it is a breather coming up here."

The grass was long, full of "bull's foreheads" (overgrown tufts, insufficiency of stock grazing, the cause), these made it heavy walking. He stopped to gather breath. He was about turning to look behind him, when he caught sight of a young lady running diagonally on the hill-side at the top of her speed, a beast in pursuit of her. Around her shoulders was a knitted scarlet cloud, this no doubt had inflamed the animal. It was rather an unnecessary article on a summer day, but on the hill there was often a cool breeze, blowing from the sea not more than ten miles away. George

did not hesitate a moment, he felt his weariness no longer. The distance was not great: he must get between the girl and the animal, or distract the animal's attention.

"Throw off your shawl!" he shouted loudly, his only fear that, terror-stricken, she would not hear him. George was terribly afraid he would be powerless to avert the catastrophe. The girl ran well, with the vigour and ease of an *Atalanta*, fleet from fear, but she was much impeded by her dress.

George was relieved when he saw the article of apparel dropping from her shoulders. The bull came thundering on; the chances were that the bait would be thrown unavailingly. He passed it, but the bright colour had caught his eye; he broke in his headlong chase; breathing steam out of his nostrils, he turned to gore the obnoxious scarf.

"Get in among the trees—climb the bank!" shouted George.

But Master Bull knew the ground as well as they; he seemed possessed of some reasoning powers. After viciously tossing the piece of fancy work, he set about prancing erratically, bellowing, his tail up, evidently intent upon a *détour* and mischief. George had approached quite near the animal; it stared at him, then made as if to make a circuit round the clump of trees, and so reach the ledge of earth where the young lady had taken refuge.

George saw that his only course was to create a diversion. Matador-like, he dashed forward and secured the discarded cloud, flaunting it defiantly in the bull's face.

Such audacity was more than the "monarch of the herd" could brook. In a moment he was charging the presumptuous pigmy. George ran and doubled, always with the bright colour a challenge for his pursuer. He had contrived to wind it round the crutch of his stick, a certain purpose in his mind; a very steep bit was near; he could not run down it himself. The moment came; it was an anxious one. If the animal diverged, the breath would be knocked out of its tantaliser's body. George calculated on the bull being unable to arrest itself; with its head to the ground, it might miss his feint, the colour still impel it forward. The bull came thundering on; its feet seemed to shake the ground; it came so near he could hear its breathing; he hurled his stick down the declivity, darting aside—thank heaven, it passed him! He was certain that it attempted to check itself, but the impetus it had gained carried it forward. He saw it, unable to arrest itself, slide, go down, to turn a complete somersault. There was a heavy thud, a writhing of the limbs, then it was still. Its neck was broken.

"The Hacketts will thank us for being in the field," murmured George with a dismal chuckle. "I must acquaint the young lady there is no longer any danger, then go up to the house. The animal may have a marketable value—be utilized for those who 'go down to the sea in ships.'"

"George—George Tustin!" exclaimed the young lady, with pleasurable surprise, "oh, what has become of that *beast*? Will it come again?"

"I think not," said George. "I fancy its neck

is broken. He charged at me madly; I got out of his way; then head over heels he went. It is Julia, is it not?"

"I suppose so."

"And how are you?"

"Rather upset and out of breath," said Julia Cannon with a little impatience. "Let us get away. What have you done with that cloud?"

"Cloud?"

"Yes; that knitted affair. It is mamma's; she insisted upon me taking it."

"Oh, I threw it down the hill-side with my stick. I'll go fetch them."

"Never mind, now," said Julia, her nervous fear of being left alone stronger than her anxiety to regain her mother's property. "I have a camp-stool and sketch-block out yonder, if they are not all smashed. But let us get out of the field. I'll send a boy for them all."

Naturally there was consternation at the farmhouse. George fancied that henceforth cordial feeling was a thing of the past. He saw that they concluded that he had taken a mean advantage of the animal. Stupid people! Whose life was of most value—Julia Cannon's, his, or the bull's?

CHAPTER IV.

INSPIRATION.

AFTER luncheon George Tustin went across to Cannon's to inquire after Julia. She was very much upset; she was lying down. Cannon was very effusive in his thanks.

After dinner George was again out of doors, wandering this way and that, never leaving very far the strip of road between the churchyard and the farmhouse that the gate barricaded. At last he was rewarded with a sight of Julia.

"I heard you were upset a little."

"Mamma made so much of it. She insisted upon my lying down. She threatens to pull Lawrence Hackett's ears. She says she is glad the bull did break its neck."

"Well, I am a little sorry. It is a lively beginning for you," laughed George, "after your quiet, monotonous life."

"Monotonous? Oh, dear no; this life is much more so. I had plenty of company; then there were the sisters and the good mother superior, and Father Laffan often came."

George looked almost pitifully at the girl. Though her eyes were bright and her features animated, pleasing recollections stirring her, he found it difficult to believe that any cheerfulness could exist where asceticism held sway.

"Well, this is a dull place. Was Father Laffan young?"

"About as young as Mr. Tustin," smiled Julia, observing George narrowly.

"Oh," ejaculated George, convinced and relieved.

"You will have an opportunity of making his acquaintance," said Julia; "he is coming to Landslope to-morrow. Do you find the village dull?"

"I did—not now." There was a certain amount

of emphasis in his words. Julia's eyes fell, her colour rose. She was a little irritated, then she began to laugh, and George laughed.

"How ridiculous you are, George Tustin!"

"I can't help that."

They laughed again, and Julia met his eyes archly. It was but a moment's scrutiny, and George felt that henceforth Julia Cannon was his world, her love his mission to gain. There was a certain tremulousness in his voice, though it was rich and full when he spoke again.

"I wish you would allow me to carry your stool and accessories when you go sketching again. I could keep an eye upon you—I mean the surrounding objects." George looked away as if searching for windmills.

"The chances are great that such an affair will happen again," responded Julia gently, taking advantage of his abstraction to scan his face again. George Tustin was certainly nice; she had always liked George, how chivalrously he had come to her rescue, how bravely he had averted the danger!

"I rather commiserated the Hacketts; I did think of making them some compensation," murmured George, "but they did not speak the truth. They told me the bull was a quiet one; I have heard that it chased a boy the other day, and there is a right of way over the field."

"Had I known I should not have gone there."

"I am glad I did not know."

"I shall always consider that I owe my life to you," declared Julia.

"That counts one in my favour," thought George with satisfaction.

"Julia!—Julia! Where are you?" came a high-pitched mellow voice.

"Mamma!" murmured Julia! "Ye—es!" What delicious shakos. George thought it like a bit out of an opera.

"Then until Father Laffan arrives?"

Julia nodded. "He will only stay a few days," added she.

"With whom were you talking?" demanded Julia's mother.

"George—George Tustin," answered Julia, attempting to be off-handed.

"Humph!" murmured Mrs. Cannon, an eye-lid slightly lowered, a shrewd compression of her lips, "he will be a nonch with you now."

"I have reason to be grateful, mamma."

"He would have been an oaf to stand idly by. Perhaps he allowed the bull to get into the field. Hackett says he supposed it was in the Cuckoo Close."

"Mamma," remonstrated Julia indignantly.

George returned to the rectory, and went up to his room. His case was open, how careless! He took out the play, a love passage had never quite satisfied him. He felt in a highly critical mood. Ah, the manuscript had been disturbed—those mischievous maids! Happily they would not understand. George sat down and commenced reading. He read on, turning over the pages with a feeling akin to disgust. What stilted stuff! He could improve upon it, they must certainly be written again, he would begin now.

Mrs. Cannon sent a maid up; the maid tapped at his door. He would be downstairs presently. The "presently" passed; George's memory was not a strong point with him. Mrs. Cannon came up stealthily, she listened outside the door, she could

hear the scratch of the pen. She tapped at the door, opened it quickly.

"George!"

George was writing madly, in full fever of composition. A look of annoyance passed across his face, down went his pen, he commenced to cram his papers into the case pell-mell.

"George, whatever are you doing that you should be so oblivious?"

Mrs. Tustin was an indifferent actress. Something in his mother's tone of voice convinced George that she was a little insincere. He looked full in her face and was sure. Her eyes flickered before his. His mother's curiosity had been too much for her; she had found means to open the case, failed to leave it as she found it. Well, it was nothing, had he known that she was so wishful he would have freely shown her what the case contained.

"It is a fad of mine—kills idle hours. Satan, you know, finds mischief for idle hands to do."

"George!" The severity of the tone stirred up a rebellious feeling in her son's breast. "When you are ordained you will have work to do, and you ought now to be giving your mind to it."

Ordained? Of course. He had not been thinking of that this last hour or more—of the future—certainly of anything but that. In his mind's eye he saw Julia Cannon; she was in his comedy. So was he. He had changed the name of his *ingenue*, he had refrained from tampering with Strephon's. It was an open secret between Strephon and he that their identity were one and the same. His contemplated ordination had never weighed upon him very heavily, but now a cloud seemed to have loomed up. He had implied doubt that conventual life could be happy; he was extremely doubtful now whether he should be happy a clergyman. He scarcely felt cut out for it. It meant foregoing something. What? Julia Cannon?

CHAPTER V.

A DECLARATION.

FATHER LAFFAN, under Julia Cannon's wing, was returning from an exploration of the village. George Tustin was walking towards it. Certainly not with the expectation of meeting either. Oh dear, no.

"Father Laffan—George—George Tustin."

Julia was a little vexed with herself that she should blunder in a formal introduction.

They exchanged a few words, the priest thanking and complimenting George on his presence of mind and bravery.

"Julia is an especial favourite of mine," said the priest; "any harm befalling her would be a shock to me."

George was quite taken with Julia's companion. He was grayer than his own father, more clerical in appearance, and still he looked genial. There was humour at lips and eyes and mouth, and with it almost feminine tenderness. With the young he must be in great favour; that he could be stern was possible, but there must be dire necessity for it.

Each went their way, and George turned more than once to look after them.

When George returned, Father Laffan, with

arms on the hurdles, was regarding the little church wistfully. St. Helen's had some pretensions to architectural beauty. Its windows were fine, the tower noble. The priest saw that there was some ancient stained glass.

"A pretty little church," murmured Father Laffan, when George approached.

"Would you care to see the interior?" George asked.

"It would give me great pleasure. How hot the day is," sighed Father Laffan; "how hot that other place must be?"

George was too astonished to answer promptly. It seemed to him that there was humorous challenge on the priest's face.

"Yes," concurred George, "it is to be hoped few—few will experience the pains."

"Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi," murmured the priest as if meditatively, crossing himself; then he placed his hand upon George's arm, "my son, His mercy is infinite."

George was silent, the addendum was latitudinarian. A religious argument he shrank from; politeness and policy components of his diffidence. The rector appeared in view much to George's relief; George motioned to him. The rector came up, at the first brush a little disconcerted, he eyed the priest shyly.

"Father Laffan—the Rev. Denys Tustin."

Both clerics bowed stately.

"Father Laffan would like to see the interior. Will you be cicerone, father?"

"With pleasure," responded the rector. "The door is open all day long, my dear sir, enter when you please."

George followed in their wake. Father Laffan lingered in the porch, the dog-tooth arch interested him. In the nave he paused to praise the proportions of the edifice. There and in the chancel he pointed out indications of the day when those of his own faith worshipped in it. George listened until he heard a sweet voice outside.

"Father Laffan! Father Laffan!"

The two elder men were oblivious, and George stealthily slipped out of the church.

Julia Cannon was on the road, perplexed.

"Have you seen Father Laffan?" asked she, "I left him here."

"He is with my father in the church," said George, "don't disturb them. I think they will become friends."

"Why not?" demanded Julia.

"There is no reason why they should not," said George. He held open the gate, "Will you not come in? Let us walk about."

"It is too hot. I will sit here."

George threw himself down on the grass at her feet, and as usual looked full into Julia's eyes. She blushed, her hat was in her lap, she occupied herself straightening some little disorganisation of its plumes.

"George Tustin, you disconcert me," said she petulantly, "why will you look at me in such a peculiar manner?"

"Because, Julia, I love you—don't go. I can't help loving you, I couldn't if I would. It is precipitate; yes, I admit as much. But it seems to me now, that I have loved you dearly from the first moment I saw you, years back. Couldn't you care for me, Julia?"

"It is so sudden," faltered Julia. "I have not been home many days."

"What matter? Haven't I said that your life after all has always been part of mine?"

"Ah, but I mean—" Julia stopped, and met George's eyes. What did she mean? Did she admit tacitly that the same feeling was with her? George was standing, bending over her. "Don't kiss me, George, mamma might not like it—not now," added she with feminine caution and promise.

George did not press the point. He was intoxicated with his happiness nevertheless, he felt sure of his ground. Besides, he heard voices near, Father Laffan expounding, his father deferentially coinciding.

"Father Laffan is odd," murmured George.

"He is good," averred Julia.

"He astonished me a few moments ago."

"Ah," smiled Julia, "he makes queer remarks at times. He is often paradoxical. The girls used to call it 'drawing us out,' if you understand the term."

Father Laffan's stick and hand were to be seen saving the air as he stood in the porch. Presently his whole body appeared, and then the rector's. Cannon approached from the farmhouse and joined the party. Their desultory conversation, each one amiably agreeing to what the other advanced, if reproduced here would look frivolous, if not absurd. But then at public dinners staid men pass hours making long speeches, fulsomely praising each other.

"George," said the rector after the quintette had fallen to pieces, "Father Laffan ought to accompany us our next archæological tour, he would inform our pundits."

"Agreeable man," murmured Father Laffan to Cannon. "I am to inspect the church books to-morrow, they date back to the time of Philip and Mary."

"He is a good neighbour," said Cannon.

"And George?" queried Mrs. Cannon mischievously.

"He is a gentleman. Whata fine frank face he has, and manly figure. All that is noble in a man, and with just that finishing touch, a suggestion of his mother—"

"But you don't know her," said Mrs. Cannon quickly and tartly, "she is *not* nice."

Julia had looked at Father Laffan, grateful and smiling sweetly; she now looked at him, entreatingly, as if begging forbearance.

"Goose," murmured Mrs. Cannon, alive to the play of feature in each face. Julia heard her and blushed. The priest's eyes rested upon one, and then upon the other. Comprehension came to him, then something else.

"Ah, my child, were he only in the bosom of Mother Church?"

Mrs. Cannon's face was one of triumph as she looked at her daughter.

The few days that Father Laffan sojourned at Landslope, he and the rector often met. George Tustin hung at his father's skirts more than was his usual habit. He touched up his play in the early mornings, so that he had a quiet conscience spending idle days. After all, morning was best for literary work, it should not smell of the lamp; the mind is fresh; a window open, the air crisp; the trees, aisles where songsters are in full throat, the country for far away, one melody. Style is

affected by these influences, it gathers a measure of these qualities—volume, it becomes, terse, crisp, mellifluous, melodious.

Father Laffan was invariably accompanied by Julia. In the future she would only have his past friendship to dwell upon. She might not see him again. By the rule of his Order, some morning he might depart on short notice to the world's end. But it seemed the most natural thing in the world that the young people should be thrown upon their own resources, the old ones had become so lovingly abstruse and pragmatical. The priest would descend at times and descry something.

"The young with the young," he would murmur with a smile.

"To be sure—to be sure," assented the rector agreeably.

Had Father Laffan propounded black white, the rector would have agreed without demurring.

Father Laffan's visit came to an end, much to the rector's regret; but George was not disconcerted. Julia and he would meet as of yore. She would resume her sketching, and he would carry camp-stool, water-colours, sundries.

"Don't you do anything, George?"

"Nothing—of much account. Can you keep a secret?" asked he, relenting.

"I think I could," murmured she persuasively; "try me."

"I have written a play," declared he without preamble, but with a laugh, and blushing boyishly.

"I should like to read it, or to hear you read it," said she admiringly; "that would be better."

"I will bring it this afternoon. We will come here; we could not have a better place, sheltered at our backs, the beautiful prospect before us. No one will care to climb up here."

"Is there a love-story in it?" questioned Julia.

"Of course," said George reprovingly. "No story is worth a rap without, no life perfect. Julia, it was the weakest point in my play until—until my heart told me that I loved you beyond everything."

"George!" ejaculated she with well-simulated indignation, "you very awkward man, I am sure you have smudged my sketch!"

CHAPTER VI.

DISTURBANCE.

THE course of true love, did it ever run smooth? Never (sepulchrally). Mrs. Tustin was exceedingly anxious about dear George. The house was only a resort for eating and sleeping, a well-ordered hotel without charges. There had been no hiding of light under a bushel. With interest the whole village watched the little comedy, not without expectation. Surely there would be collision, explosion!

The farmhouse and the rectory must be blind to what was going on. But Mrs. Tustin was not at all blind. George was constant in attendance on Julia Cannon, and how could he marry her? Mrs. Tustin conferred with her husband. He fidgetted impatiently, again counselled non-intervention; but she was sure that

George's action troubled his father. She would talk to Mrs. Cannon. George's wife must be his coadjutor in the parish.

Mrs. Tustin looked significantly at her husband, when, after luncheon, George again slipped away. From her observatory she witnessed what, under other circumstances, would have titillated her as a pleasing bit of spring-time romance. Seen in the sylvan arcade, the understanding between them complete, Julia looking up archly into George's face, George regarding her tenderly and protectingly, the young couple looked charming. But there are occasions when a mother must be Spartan, trampling all sentiment under foot. She walked into the bedroom—the *writing-case had vanished!* Invidious boy! He would read his play to her, but not to his own mother! Tears, bitter tears.

The lovers reached the eminence. George took the camp-stool, demurring a little. She must study his convenience, the manuscript would rest upon his knees; she would be quite comfortable on the grass, hear better. George read on for some time, apparently without exciting the interest of his audience, then it clapped its hands; it had grasped the story. He paused once, stealthily looking off his page; she was so quiet, her hat off as customary with her. He stroked her hair fondly, resuming his reading. He had come to a thrilling passage, the most tense point of the love duet. His voice was moved by it, it was so real to himself; her hands were grasping his, her head against his arm. She was touched—yes, ah, tender soul, there was a tear in her eye.

"George," pleaded she quaveringly, "do not let him sail away!"

"I must," expostulated George; "at present the conclusion is lame. But of course I shall bring them together and confound their enemies."

"Shall you have it acted in a theatre," asked she innocently.

"There's the rub," said George, shaking his head; "most probably not."

"I say, I am sure it would be beautiful. If this hill could be put on the stage and the arch of trees over the road."

"And you and I on the stage, dear," smiled George, seeing how she had appropriated a *persona*.

"Ah, George, I cannot help having the feeling that our little comedy will end here as in the play. You will go your way, I mine."

"Nonsense," said George emphatically.

"My mother is so odd," mourned Julia.

"Mine is," advanced George dolefully; "but that amounts to little. I certainly cannot now live without you."

"You will be clergyman here."

"I don't know that I shall," said George slowly.

"I have had serious thoughts."

"Your poor father would be broken-hearted."

"That is the mischief of it all," murmured George despairingly; "were he disposed to take it easily, he would be worried into regarding it unfilial. Oh, Julia, do you care for me at all?" demanded he plaintively.

"You know I do, George!"

"Then the die is cast. If the worst comes, we can run away together."

"George—George Tustin," cried Julia severely, relinquishing his hand and rising erect, her eyes

flashing, "how dare you! Who authorized you to put 'we,' I should like to know? Unless you withdraw that suggestion I will run away from you now, for ever and ever. We will remain as we are until we have full and free consent."

"Yes, yes," said George contritely; "it was base on my part. I will take my cue from you. Don't run away yet, I have to tell you something—it is no use meeting trouble half way, now is it?" asked he, racking his brains for the "something" that should interest her sufficiently to cause her to forget her alarm.

But trouble was to meet them. Mrs. Tustin gave the young couple a little grace; then, without taking any one into her confidence, she sallied forth in her best war paint. She was, however, at a great amount of trouble for the very short-lived exposure of her magnificence. It was certain that in less than twenty minutes she was beating a very hasty and undignified retreat, Mrs. Cannon's artillery being too much for her.

George Tustin was amazed—having escorted Julia to the door-flag of the farmhouse—to see a matronly arm extended, and Julia dragged in through the aperture with a wrench, and the half-open door closed with a bang in his face. Well might he be astonished! He could not storm the castle, as in feudal times; he could not very well kick at the door to express his disapprobation. He walked away, his flag very much fallen. Had he been kicked in place of the door, he could not have felt more out of sorts.

His mother sat magisterially, her lips compressed. His father was agitated. George would have been dense had he failed to divine everything.

"Mother, can I have a word with you?"

"Yes, George—here."

George paused a moment; he was very white; from the first moment he had absolved his father, he must not forget himself with the other parent.

"Mother, you have been across to Cannon's? What have you done?" asked George tremulously.

"My duty to you, George. I don't think I shall cross their threshold again. It is very certain that you—a clergyman shortly—cannot marry Julia Cannon."

"Then I shall never marry, or ever be a clergyman. With my feeling upon this matter I should be unworthy."

Had a bomb fallen in the room the consternation could not have been greater. George opened the door and passed out, the rector clasping his hands agonizedly.

"Amelia, you have done wrong," he groaned.

"I have done my duty," affirmed she, doubt beginning to arise in her mind.

Overhead they could hear George pacing to and fro, then he was still. After a time he came down, to all appearance collected. But dinner was dreary; George was taciturn, and the rector miserable; Mrs. Tustin flustered in her attempts to bolster up her confidence. Once she attempted to re-open the matter, but George expressed a wish that it should be allowed to drop.

A note was in George Tustin's hand. He was at his wits' end to devise a scheme that should lead to its safe delivery. Fortune favoured him, and Julia Cannon read—

"I *must* see you. I shall be out, screened from view. Only show yourself to

"Yours ever,
"GEORGE."

How to steal out? Julia Cannon detested deceit; yet she felt it only due to her lover to apologize for the apparent rudeness he had been treated with.

"George, it is all over," gasped Julia tearfully. "I am going to Brinkhill; if I object, I am to return to the convent."

"Go to Brinkhill," urged George anxiously.

"Oh, George, why did your mother come? Even papa is incensed. Are we so much inferior? Papa believes he is more than your equal so far as pedigree goes. If there is anything he is proud of, it is that, and that the land we see was once in the possession of the family. Good-bye, George."

"I will not say 'Good-bye,'" George returned passionately. "You must agree to what I proposed!" He gathered her in his arms.

"No, I cannot do that," said she sadly; "do not urge me. I can be true. You must be satisfied with that."

"I will never give you up," said he fondly, "never." One kiss and the lovers separated.

CHAPTER VII.

A SITUATION.

"HALLO, Tustin, what are you doing here?"

"Training for a livelihood."

"What? I thought it all cut and dried."

"Have changed my mind."

"Not wisely, but too well; matter of conscience, eh? Then what's your little game?"

"I've written a play."

"Ye gods!" groaned his inquisitor in alarm and pityingly.

"I'll read it to you if you like."

"Thanks, busy just at present; another time most happy—"

"Stop a moment," said George Tustin with a detaining hand, "I should like advice."

"Ah, not self-opinionated. *Rara avis*. Well, I'm going to the Kean. Blackhand is sure to be there; great at the Hilarity. Seen him? No? Time you had. I'll introduce you. Better pay him a fee, d'ye see; worth your while. He's straight. That won't say that he'll bring a lessee to you. You understand? His time should be worth something."

Advice, pruning, acceptance, a manager sanguine. "Strategy" a success. First night, the nervous author not in the house. The second cries from all parts of it—"Author! author!" A young lady in tears, whether of joy or grief a mystery to those about her. She read her programme, "Strategy, by George Creuse." It excited no curiosity until the play came on, then she knew it, though it was altered; but it was *her* play, the play read to her on the hill-side. George Creuse? George Creuse Tustin to be sure!

George Tustin felt himself pushed before the curtain, the glare of gas from the footlights seemed to rise up and scorch his eyes. He was

certainly a handsome fellow, his face lit up with pleasure and triumph. The audience appeared to like his looks, and he was young; what might not be expected of him? Suddenly he seemed as if magnetized. A face in the audience, to the exclusion of all others, caused him to forget where he was. And the expression in the face, so complex! Pride, joy, and with it anxious entreaty. He became conscious of impatience at the wings. No dramatic author made a more awkward exit.

"Something to learn yet," murmured a voice in the orchestra stalls. Julia Cannon's vindictive look almost annihilated the budding critic.

George Tustin was waiting in the lobby. Ambrose Cannon had scarcely recovered from his great astonishment, but he was vigorous in his manipulation of George Tustin's back. All through he had been inclined to encourage the disgraced.

"George, you must go home—at once. Your father is seriously ill. Why did you not give them your address?—that was cruel. They have been advertising for you."

"I vowed that I would not go home until my mother had restored the *entente cordiale*. I did write to let them know I was all right."

"George, she has done her best. For a time she would not believe otherwise than that I knew where you were. Mother writes to me, I am ashamed to say it, triumphantly; your mother has been on her knees to her. George, your father is grieving for you."

"I will go for *his* sake," said George with compunction.

"And mine," murmured Julia.

George Tustin took the night mail. A note at his rooms he snatched up to peruse in the train. It was a request for a play. He need not take Orders, he might reasonably take it that his fortune was assured.

"Why should you be forced into what you have a distaste for, my poor boy," murmured the rector, several bottles of doctor's stuff the better for George's presence; "the advowson is worth something."

"George," murmured his mother, "*she* was a hard woman; my neck has been under her foot. I shall never put myself in her way again—never. Cannon will listen to you, he says he will not have Julia miserable for life."

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER X.

DREAMING ASUNDER.

FOR the first few days the condition of Agnes was such as to fill her friends with anxiety, and to demand the closest attention of her husband. If she awoke in his absence a bewildered look came into her face, and she broke into tears of vague alarm and distress. She had learned so completely to cling to him and rely on him in

troubles past, that she never felt safe when he was out of her sight.

Under these circumstances her family could regard him only with grateful consideration. His love was the link that seemed to keep this frail life still among them; no one else knew how to soothe the invalid to rest, or to cheer her to animation as he did. Yet, as he came and went in the little household, it was evident to the members of it that he was, though among them, not of them.

The disorganized state of the usually regular establishment permitted this fact to be ignored for a time, though it might bring embarrassment afterwards. All formal visiting was given up; no one expected to be invited to meet the newly-married couple, and introductions to the husband only occurred casually.

Even the neat little dinners, which Miss Leake loved to preside over at seven o'clock, were permitted to fall into abeyance, or at least Henry Dilworth's attendance at them was not exacted. It was reasonable that he should take his meals with his wife if he preferred and she demanded it; and so the most formal ceremonial of the day was avoided. Also it was natural that he should wish to escape into the open air from the atmosphere of the sick room whenever his wife did not need his presence; and so it came to pass that he was not compelled to spend many hours in the pretty drawing-room, where the lounges and easy-chairs were discomfort to him, and the nick-nacks a perplexity. For too much comfort was a discomfort, too much luxury a trouble to a man of his simple habits. He had not learned to use delicate appliances with unconscious care, and felt himself rough and out of place amid the carved chair-legs and embroidered covers.

Mr. Leake went in and out among these things without thought and without disaster; they were not anxiety to his brother-in-law, and yet did not altogether escape damage at his hands or from his feet.

"Those dreadful boots!" Miss Leake observed with a sigh. "Agnes must really tell him to get lighter ones."

Although Henry Dilworth was so conscious of the dainty brightness of all things around him, he did not observe the havoc made therein by his own carelessness. He was not untidy, but he was accustomed to work with few materials, and to have these always at hand. He had never kept the working part of life in the background in favour of the ornamental and recreational, and his personal possessions, few as they were, were not of a most elegant sort.

Miss Leake was detected by her brother gazing in melancholy fashion at a very rough overcoat, a clumsy umbrella, and a rude sort of fishing-basket, which encumbered the furniture of the hall.

"We have Agnes back again," said Robert Leake with a smile, "but she has brought a few trials with her."

"This is such a small house," sighed Miss Leake, "and we have to be so particular about what we keep in it, if it is to look nice. If the place were larger it would not matter so much."

Henry Dilworth very soon took a hint that given to him not to smoke all over the house,

and retired with his pipe to the diminutive library or breakfast-room, where he pored over some volumes which he had sent for from London. Even this use of the least important sitting-room was a concession on the part of Miss Leake. Her brothers were not great smokers, and willingly took their cigars out of doors when staying at the Stepping Stones.

Agnes knew this well, and when she found her husband studying prints of birds with a strong smell of tobacco in the air, she expressed her amazement.

"You *must* be in favour with Susie, if she lets you smoke here," she said. "Robert and Charlie always have to go out with their cigars."

"I won't do it again," said Henry Dilworth. "I'm glad you told me."

But when Miss Leake found that he had been spoken to on the subject, she remonstrated with her sister.

"We must do nothing that will interfere with his comfort and make him feel that he is not at home here," she said conscientiously.

Agnes recovered by degrees, and was able after a time to take something like her old place in the household; then a new consciousness awoke in her. She was aware at first of a lack of the old ease and comfort in the domestic relations at the Stepping Stones; there was in the atmosphere a certain dissatisfaction and criticism which had not existed before she left home; it took her some time to understand that there was something in the manners of her husband not quite congenial to her sisters, that there was something in the life he led not quite congenial to himself, but as soon as she understood she tried to put the whole matter right.

She began by suggesting to him various little alterations. "Why don't you do so and so," or, "didn't you know that you ought to have acted in such a way?"

He tried to please her, but the result was a failure; and she began to look wistfully at her sisters, and to say of him apologetically, "He is so clever and so good, but he has not been used to this sort of life."

So she fell away from her first grateful admiration of him; and such a falling away could only be the beginning of a disastrous end.

Robert Leake had been favourably impressed by his brother-in-law and had spoken well of him to Miss Leake after their first interview, when she anxiously asked his opinion.

"I think him a very fine fellow; and I think Agnes may be a happy woman if she knows how to appreciate him and make the best of it; but I doubt whether she's got it in her, in which case I'm sorry for both."

"I am sure Agnes will make a good wife," Miss Leake protested; "she is most affectionate and docile."

"Yes, when things are to her liking. Oh, you need not tell me that she's a good girl, according to her lights; but I doubt whether she understands the sort of man she's married."

"Why should she understand? I don't see that it's desirable for her to enter into the kind of life that he may have led."

"When married people don't understand one another, there has to be a sacrifice somewhere, you know."

Miss Leake did not deny this. She was only determined that the sacrifice should not be on the side of Agnes. She said as much.

"Well, it's not my affair," said her brother. "He's old enough to look after himself, and he's walked into the difficulty with his eyes open. It's my opinion that he knew what he was doing better than she did, and that he's prepared to go through with it."

"Of course; he ought to be."

"Ah, but Agnes, you know, isn't. She never did, and she never will do, anything to make herself seriously uncomfortable."

"It wouldn't be right to ask her," said Susie indignantly.

Robert Leake only lifted his eyebrows, and wondered whether the life of this strong and original man must for ever be stranded in the shallow waters of his pretty sister's chosen pool of existence. But it was not, as he said, his affair; he had only to look after his sister's pecuniary interests and leave the rest to shape itself. Nevertheless, when he got some idea of how circumstances were progressing, in a later visit to the Stepping Stones, he remonstrated with Susie.

"You're all making a mistake," he said; "you must take him as he is, and you will perhaps find him something to be proud of after all. But you'll never make a fine gentleman of him."

"We don't wish to do," Miss Leake replied with dignity; "but a little conformity to social usages is surely necessary."

"I wouldn't keep him here. The life's not fit for him. He wants a bigger world to move in. The people here are too small, too provincial, not intelligent enough to do him justice. They see only his bad manners."

"Not intelligent enough! too provincial!" Miss Leake repeated, and did not attempt to say more.

Robert Leake, however, gave his brother-in-law a hint that he might take his wife to the sea-side to aid her convalescence. And his idea was seized with eagerness by Henry Dilworth. When it was first mentioned to Agnes, it seemed to please her also. But, afterwards, when she had spoken on the subject to Miss Leake, her tone changed altogether.

"Susie says we ought not to think of it. I might be taken ill again. I ought not to leave home."

"Is this your home, dear child?" he asked, looking into her eyes.

It was the first time that he had asked such a question, and her face flushed.

"I have no other," she said.

"I must make you one," was his answer.

For the Stepping Stones, if a home to her, was none to him; and his active spirit was beginning to fret against the restraints put upon it there, although he led his own life as much as he could. The companionship of his wife was gradually being taken from him, his influence over her gradually declined, and he spent more and more of his time in the open air—fishing, walking, exploring the country. He became a well-known figure in the district, and was as much at home among the hills as he was a stranger in the drawing-rooms of Elmdale.

He had been induced to go to one dinner party

—sorely against his will—because Agnes had desired it.

"They will be offended; they won't understand if you refuse. Oh, you *must* go," she had said, with such earnestness that he yielded.

His compliance brought little satisfaction to any one; and he could never be induced to repeat the experiment. Even Miss Leake hardly desired that he should. She began to describe him to her friends as eccentric; very clever, indeed, but like no one else, and wholly given up to scientific pursuits.

Agnes still clung to the hope that he might be mitigated and moderated into something more presentable. She began to take Miss Leake's view, that a good husband is not entirely good unless he seems so to the world. She tried still to introduce little alterations into his habits and dress; and it was by the light of her loving anxiety that her sister's disapproval was revealed to Henry Dilworth.

"I don't see *why* you shouldn't be just like other people," she said desperately at last; "you are so clever, and they are so silly; it must be *easy* to do like them."

"Is it advisable?" he said smiling. "You haven't put it temptingly."

"But you know what I mean; you are too clever not to do," she said petulantly.

"I am afraid I do, dear," he answered, taking her hands gently, and looking into her face. "I am afraid you mean that you are a little ashamed of me."

"Oh, Henry, no; not that. *Why should* I be? You are better than any of them. But they don't understand, and I want them to."

"Isn't it enough if *you* understand? Can't we live our lives and never mind them?"

"But this is *my* life," upon which he let her hands go and turned away.

Gradually her reliance upon him, her submission to his judgment, had been slipping away. Her sisters had, very gradually and unobtrusively, taken their old place with her, and cured her of that absolute dependence on her husband which had made the basis of her love and marriage.

Susie was always anxious to save Mr. Dilworth "trouble," to take the care of his wife off his hands, and to leave him free for other occupations. Her kindness was a gradual usurpation, and yet was so cleverly masked, that Henry Dilworth himself scarcely knew what she was doing until the thing was done.

Then he discovered that his wife had hardly any more need of him; that her life was complete without him, and that, indeed, there was little room left for him in it. Her sisters had, with mistaken kindness, taught her to appreciate his merits all over again on a new foundation; and her old estimate of him seem to be changed for another and very different one.

"He is so original," they would say. "Of course a man like that must follow his own pursuits. It wouldn't be right for you to expect him to be a great deal with you. It would be a waste of talent."

So Agnes was tutored gradually to let him alone, and to go back to her old amusements without him. She drove out with her sisters; she made and received visits; and hardly wondered at her husband's more frequent absences and

increasing abstraction in her presence. It was Miss Leake who made kindly efforts to be interested in his occupations, and who encouraged Agnes to bestow some attention on the results—a thing the young wife would not have dreamt of doing for herself.

Miss Leake asked questions about the plants, butterflies, and geological specimens he discovered in his rambles, and declared that it was wonderfully interesting to hear of them. She turned them over in her fingers, pointed out to Agnes imaginary peculiarities, ignored really valuable qualities, and apologized for the insignificance of the most valuable specimens.

"Oh yes, you'll find a better than that, I dare say, if you go to the same place again; you won't throw it away, of course, till you do," she said of a unique example, concerning which he intended to write to a learned correspondent.

Agnes tried to be interested in these things, as Susie told her to be, but she could not manage it.

"They are very ugly, are they not?" she asked. "I suppose no one would care about them if they had not such long names?"

On the whole, Henry Dilworth preferred her old blank indifference; it had been pleasanter than this sympathy of effort and ignorance.

At last he said to her that he must go back to Australia soon, if only for a short time, to arrange his affairs. Would she like to go with him? She seemed surprised, doubtful, and melancholy. Finally she said that she would "ask Susie."

"Must we not decide these things for ourselves now?" he demanded gently. "When people are married they need only consult each other."

"But I don't know what I should like," Agnes objected.

"And Susie will tell you?" he answered.

"Why shouldn't she tell me if she knows?"

"Don't I know just as well? Are my wishes and my opinions nothing to you?"

"Your wishes are, of course. But you never would wish me to do what would make me ill; and your opinion isn't so good as Susie's—about me I mean. She knows just what I can do."

He said no more; the force of his will was as nothing before these persistent waves of gentle selfishness, which seemed to yield sometimes, but always returned to what they were before.

He asked her once if she would like him to settle in England, and she brightened at the idea.

"There is such a pretty house to let in Long Valley, only a mile and a half away," she said at once; "we might take that."

"I am afraid not. It is a villa residence and no more. There would be nothing for me to do there."

"You find enough to do now, don't you? and it would be just the same."

The smile with which he answered her was destitute of cheerfulness.

"Do you think this is a life for a man?" he asked.

"I don't know what you want. What should you do?"

"I might take a farm in an agricultural county, and work that; you would be near enough to visit your sisters occasionally; and we should be happy together, should we not? I see so little of you now, Agnes."

"You could see more of me if you liked," she objected, "but you will never go out with me when I pay visits; and you know I can't walk far. I don't see why you should want to take me away from my friends."

"Could we not be happy alone together, dear child?"

"You might, because you don't like society; but I have always been used to it; and as for a farm, the idea is dreadful. I could never hear of it. If you must go away from Elmdale, where I have always been so happy, it would be best to go to London. Robert says you might get an appointment of some sort, he thinks."

"Of what sort?"

"Oh, I don't know, but he does. He thinks you are clever enough, and he says that people in London are not so narrow as people in the country. They would not be so stupid; they would appreciate you more, and we might go into society together."

He spoke no more of settling in England after that. He put the future away from his thoughts, and arranged only for the immediate present.

Miss Leake, on the other hand, talked quite cheerfully of his return to Australia and to scientific explorations.

"It will be a trial to Agnes to lose you," she said, "but it is her duty to bear that. No good wife would be selfish enough to keep you from such pursuits. I wish the dear girl were strong enough to go with you; but we must take care of her in your absence."

Henry Dilworth occupied himself in his preparations. He had been quieter and more taciturn since that last discussion with his wife; all the hopes of a return to their happy old relations had been based on a departure from Elmdale. For the sake of Agnes he had been willing to change his mode of life, and to settle quietly in her own country; but it was evident that no sacrifice was sufficient which did not involve destruction of his self-respect as well as ambition. Therefore he gave up hoping for the home he had dreamt of in the first week of his married life.

Sorrow had visited him beforetimes, and hardships often; neither had quelled his hopeful spirit. Now, for the first time in his life, the bitterness of personal hope disappointed and affection slighted entered into his soul and saddened it. The armour of his simplicity and straightforward purpose had protected him hitherto from slight and humiliation; he had removed the defence in the ardour of his love for Agnes, and he found himself wounded by the hand which he had permitted to disarm him.

And Agnes herself was not satisfied, though she had chosen to throw in her lot with her sisters and to forsake her husband.

As the time for his departure approached her interest in visits and amusements declined. She followed him about with a wistful look in her eyes, and was indifferent to the attractions of Susie's cheerful conversation. She would sit down and watch him sometimes as he wrote letters or turned over his portfolios and cases; and he was conscious of her presence, but the time had gone by when they could fall into easy conversation together, or share their thoughts and anxieties without difficulty.

She was even fretful, and anxious, as it were, for some one to find out her unhappiness and comment upon it; but no one did her the latter service.

"Poor child! we must keep her spirits up as much as we can until you are gone," Miss Leake said to Henry Dilworth; "then she will get over her trouble."

Susie's cordiality and kindness to her brother-in-law at this time were wonderful to see; she had fought a battle in which she believed herself victorious, but she was anxious to persuade her opponent that there had been no struggle at all. She acted as if the household at the Stepping Stones was all that she represented it to her friends—a harmonious family, where each member appreciated the others and every step taken by any one was warmly applauded by all.

"Agnes is going nowhere at present," she explained; "she gives all her time to her husband. They are devoted to one another. But of course he must go back to carry on his discoveries in Australia. It is only the illness of Agnes that could have kept him here so long. His life is a perfect sacrifice to science. Isn't it strange that he should care for a simple little creature like Agnes? For she never was clever, you know, like Kate." (Kate's talents, by-the-by, had grown largely in her sister's estimation since her death.) "But it often is so with very clever men: they admire young girls who are simply sweet and intelligent."

"And pretty," her hearer suggested.

"Yes, I suppose she is pretty; people often tell me so; but when you know her other good qualities so well, you don't think of that. There never was a more gentle, affectionate, tractable creature anywhere."

Nevertheless this sweet creature sometimes looked at her sister with eyes in which reproach mingled with appeal. She was not satisfied or happy; but she did not know how to express her wants, she did not even know what she wanted; she waited for Susie to tell her, and Susie kept silence discreetly.

Henry Dilworth, meanwhile, felt that she had slipped out of his life altogether. She was very caressing, almost anxiously affectionate at this time; but she had no hopes or plans in common with him. Sometimes, when he met her wistful and troubled look, he felt inclined to take her in his arms and beg her to follow him through the world and trust to his care and love for her happiness and comfort. But he never did it; a sense of the weakness of will which lay beneath all her tenderness of feeling subdued him to silence. Perhaps, if he had yielded to this impulse, the tenderness would have prevailed for a time, and she would have gone with him; but discontent and reproach might have followed, to break down and embitter their love more effectually than a long separation.

When the day of parting came, the young wife's white face was a sight sad enough to damp even Miss Leake's persistent cheerfulness. The poor girl looked at her sisters with a dumb protest against their failure to solve the problem of her life with less pain to herself. She looked at her husband with imploring tenderness, as if she entreated him to forgive her for sending him away alone. He had accepted the position, and had no words to

throw away upon it. Besides, his hurt was too deep to bear meddling with. She had slipped from his life, as if his love had no hold upon her, and he could not endure to utter a reproach or express a regret.

When he gave her his parting kiss she clung to him in a silence more passionate than words. It seemed as if, now the moment had come, she was utterly unprepared for it, and could not bear to let him go. He loosed her arms gently from his neck, kissed her again, looked into her eyes and was gone.

Then she threw herself on the couch in an abandonment of grief, and refused to be comforted.

"No, no," she said to her anxious sisters; "do not speak to me. You do not care. You do not understand. You never liked him, and he is better than any of us. Why didn't I go with him? Why didn't you send me? I shall never be happy here—never. I ought to have gone. Why didn't Susie tell me to go?"

"Poor child! poor dear child!" said Susie sympathetically; "she will get over it presently."

(To be continued.)

SCENTS.

II.

AUGUST ROSES.

DO you remember how we sat, my child,
Below the wych-elm, while they cut the
corn?

In all the splendour of an August morn,
When scarlet, azure-gold, are lavish piled
Upon a tree or flower growing wild:
Then warm soft odours are each moment borne
On murmuring zephyrs, and we laugh to scorn
The fleecy clouds that drift across the wild!
'Tis winter now—mid-winter—yet I hear
As then the reapers sing, the swish of scythe,
And scent the roses falling soft to earth:
What matter that the end is very near?
Old age is good, though youth may be more
blythe,

And rest is sweet: far from pale winter's dearth!

III.

SYRINGA.

Oh, evening-haunted garden, where she came,
And sat beside me as dark shadows played
Beneath the hills, where the last sunbeams fade.
I see thee swift once more! once more the flame
Of bright laburnum gleams: I hear her name
Called through the latticed-window: there I
prayed
And wou her love-troth: yet afar I've strayed
Since those sweet hours, and none but fate can
blame!—

Still when thy scent, syringa, drifting by
Revives my memory; once again I see
Her darling face: and sitting silently,
Those dear, dear days, just once more come to me:
I hold her hand: I hear her sweet low sigh,
And 'neath thy charm, am what I used to be!

J. E. PANTOX.

THE UNFINISHED ANTHEM.

BY ANGELO J. LEWIS.

IT was five o'clock—tea-time in Belgravia, and tea-time in Short's Gardens. The Belgravian meal is no doubt the more refined; but, on the other hand, that of Short's Gardens is by far the more substantial affair. I don't go so far as to suggest that Belgravia would exchange tea-tables with Short's Garden's, but I am very sure that Short's Gardens would not exchange with Belgravia. Tea-time in Short's Gardens is accompanied by a *crescendo* of appetizing odours, ranging from the faint suggestiveness of the whelk to the rollicking self-assertion of the bloater. At No. 13, on the evening when our story begins, the aroma of bloater was predominant. Commencing in the basement, where good-natured Mrs. Pottersby kept house with her equally good-natured husband, it floated benignly upwards, and took possession of the whole house, even finding its way through the closed door into the second-floor room, where Maggie and Willie Browne were seated at their evening meal—a repast, by-the-way, by no means up to the proper Short's Gardens standard. No tea-pot was visible; the bread was terribly stale, the butter sadly scanty (though it did its best to make up in strength what it lacked in quantity), the milk-and-water painfully transparent.

Willie Browne, an undeveloped gourmand, gave a long-drawn sniff as the fragrant aroma from outside met his nostrils, and glanced wistfully at his sister.

She answered the look.

"It does smell good, Willie, doesn't it? I wish we had some for ourselves. Never mind; we must make the best of it. We will open the door, and the smell will be a relish for our bread-and-butter."

Willie opened the door, though with an uncertain look, as if he rather doubted the efficacy of the expedient. His sister continued—

"We earned nothing yesterday, you know, because of the rain, but it is fine to-night, and if we are lucky, you shall have something nice for tea to-morrow."

The boy tried his best to look content, and took a mouthful of the stale bread-and-butter, accompanying it with a prolonged inhalation of the savoury perfume. The aroma became more and more decided.

"Maggie," he exclaimed excitedly, "I do believe its coming upstairs!"

As he spoke a heavy tread was heard ascending the stairs, and then a pause, and a sound of heavy breathing.

"It's Mrs. Pottersby," said Maggie, going to the door.

A very stout woman slowly entered, one hand holding a plate, and the other pressed to her side.

"Oh, dear, them stairs! they'll be the death of me," she ejaculated. "Maggie, my dear, I've brought you a little relish for your tea."

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Pottersby," said Maggie with a bright smile. "I was just wishing I had something nice for Willie, and you came at the very moment, just like a good fairy."

"Rather too fat for a fairy, I'm afraid, my

dear," said the good lady, smiling in return. "Lor', I remember the time when I was as slim as you. You wouldn't think it, to look at me, would you now?" Maggie mentally admitted that she wouldn't. "Father out as usual, I suppose?"

"Yea," said Maggie; "he is still looking for an engagement."

"Looking for a fiddlestick!" said the stout lady. "Drat the man; I'd 'engagement' him if he belonged to me—a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing—but I know you don't like to hear anything against him; so I'll take myself off, and go and give my old man his tea. But one thing I *will* say—he don't deserve to have such a daughter. There now!"

And, giving Maggie a sounding kiss, the good-natured old lady shuffled out of the room, and left the boy and girl to their much-improved repast.

Maggie and Willie Browne, now aged fifteen and twelve respectively, had lost their mother at an early age, and their father, Moray Browne, had wrecked his life and theirs on the rock of drink. He was by profession a musician, and in his younger days had been known, not only as a skilful performer on many instruments, but an exceptionally gifted composer. Time was, when the announcement of an organ recital by Moray Browne would bring together listening hundreds. With upturned faces and bated breath they hung on the noble music, as the rhythmic strains of Handel or the subtler harmonies of Beethoven streamed forth under the spell of his lissom fingers. And after the "Grand Old Masters" had told their tale, the player would lay his hands once more on the keys, and begin some weird improvisation, a poet's dream of fantastic harmonies. Sunshine and shadow, the song of the lark in the heavens, the splash of the wave on the shore, the sigh of the wind, and the rattle of the thunder-storm,—all seemed to answer his call, and to weave themselves at his pleasure into his musical creations. Many a man with meaner gifts has won lasting fame, but Moray Browne's one vice, the

rift within the lute,
That, slowly widening, makes the music mute,

had sapped his energies, and dragged him gradually down, until at length he, who should have been a chief in the Valhalla of song, had sunk into a pot-house loafer, earning a scanty livelihood as violinist at a fifth-rate theatre. Of late even this poor resource had failed. His irregularities had grown too flagrant to be tolerated, and he had been ignominiously dismissed. He now spent the greater part of each morning in bed, and the remainder of the day out of doors, professedly in search of an engagement, but really wandering from one public-house to another in the hope of meeting some acquaintance who would invite him to drink. Meanwhile his unfortunate children were left to shift for themselves as best they might, their father probably supposing, if he thought at all about the matter, that some of the neighbours lent them a helping hand.

The meal over, Maggie washed and put away the tea-things, and then for some little time the brother and sister sat gazing into the dying fire. The silence was broken by Maggie.

"I think we had better start now, Willie."

The boy roused himself from his reverie.

"Must we go, Maggie?" he said in a doleful tone.

"You know we must, dear," she replied; "I don't like it any more than you, but what are we to do? We must live, and as father brings home nothing, we must do what we can for ourselves."

The boy got slowly up from his seat.

"Yes, I suppose there's no help for it, but I wish we hadn't got to do it—I do *hate* it so."

"Never mind, dear," said his sister soothingly; "perhaps if we do very well to-night, we need not go out to-morrow."

The boy brightened a little at this suggestion; and the two having put on such poor outer clothing as they possessed, Maggie took her father's violin from its case, and transferring it to a green baize bag, the brother and sister descended the stairs, and passed out into the winter night.

Two hours later, at the bar of a flaring gin-palace, bright with gas and heavy with the combined scents of sawdust, tobacco, and malt-liquor, a man stood, already three parts intoxicated, and endeavouring to induce another, in the garb of a mechanic, to treat him. Few would have supposed that the besotted wretch before them, with his blotched face, bleared eyes, and shining black frock coat buttoned up to his unshaven chin, was the once famous Moray Browne. On the present occasion he was in a lachrymose mood, and was saying in a maudlin tone—

"I've had m'sfortunes; m'sfortunes, I tell you; m'sfortunes over which no c'ntrl. You wouldn't think it, t' look at me now, but I was a gen'leman once."

A roar of laughter greeted the assertion.

"Ha, ha! that's good!" said one, "Soaker Browne a gentleman. D'ye hear that, Harry?"

"I tell you I *was* a gen'leman," insisted Browne with tipsy impressiveness. "Real gen'leman."

At this point, it having been obvious for some time past that the speaker had no more money to spend, and that nobody was inclined to treat him, the landlord interposed—

"A real gentleman, are you? Well, you may be a gentleman, or even a lord, for the matter of that, for you're certainly as drunk as a lord, but we don't want any real gentlemen—of your sort—here. So just clear out, will you?"

"I tell you I *was* a gen'leman," insisted Browne. "Real, bony-fide gen'leman."

"That'll do," said the landlord savagely. "Bob, chuck him out." A stalwart potman advanced, and seizing the drunken man by the nape of his neck, dragged him to the door, and shot him out with such violence that he fell, and cut his head severely against the pavement. For some moments he lay stunned, then staggered to his feet. The shock, and the flow of blood from the wound, had partly sobered him. He turned round, and shook his fist at the house in impotent rage.

"The curs! The cowards! They wouldn't believe me, but I *was* a gentleman, after all, and might be now, if it wasn't for the cursed drink!"

With aching head and bruised limbs he began to move slowly homewards, reflecting, more bitterly than he had done for many a long day, on the misery and degradation of his present condition. As he passed a side street, his attention was

attracted by hearing a melody that sounded strangely familiar. He went in the direction of the sound, and found, in the midst of a listening crowd, his daughter Maggie accompanying, on his own violin, the sweet clear voice of her brother in the solo part of an anthem which he himself had written in his days of happiness and honour, twenty years before. The boy's cap lay in front of the performers, and now and again a listener would drop in a copper or a silver coin. The boy's face wore a shame-faced look, but if his sister shared his repugnance to their compulsory task, it was forgotten for the moment. It needed but a glance at her face to see that her soul was far away, wafted on the wings of the exquisite music to some mystic land of rest. The vagabond on the skirts of the crowd pulled his shabby hat further forward over his brow to hide the tears that *would* come into his eyes. "My God!" he cried half-aloud, "to think that I could write like *that*, and that my children should be begging for bread!" And then the measure changed, and the clear contralto of the girl joined with her brother's voice. Hitherto the song had seemed the wail of a despairing soul, but now it breathed a strain of hope and peace, and the cheering words rang out in the frosty air:—

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

"Ah! if I could!" sobbed the repentant vagabond, "but it's too late, too late!"

He turned and wandered slowly homeward, those sweet clear voices seeming to pursue him still with their message of peace. On reaching home, after bathing his wounded head, he forthwith undressed and went to bed. Presently he heard his children come in, but he feigned sleep, and made no sign. Glad to escape questioning, they put the violin back in its case and their earnings in a safe hiding-place, and then they too retired to rest.

The boy and girl were quickly asleep, but not so their father. As the memory of a drowning man is said to wake into preternatural activity, and to bring up, in one awful panorama, all the misdeeds of his past life, so Moray Browne lay sleeplessly recalling the scenes of his wasted past. The notes of the forgotten anthem had brought back, with startling vividness, the memory of those brighter days when he had possessed "love, honour, troops of friends;" when good men had received him as a welcome guest, and bright eyes had grown brighter at his coming. And now, what was he? A hopeless vagabond, flung with contempt from a tavern door, and his children wanderers in the streets—beggars singing for bread. For the first time for many years he saw himself as he really was, and lashed himself with unavailing scorn. And yet amid his keenest stings of shame, his most passionate self-upbraidings, came the remembrance of his children's voices, like angels bringing a message of peace, "Let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Throughout the night the repentant prodigal tossed in feverish unrest, resolutions to amend

and grief for the past alternating with moods of black despair. And still, in the deepest darkness, like a ray of silver light, came ever and anon into his brain the burden of the anthem again. When morning broke he talked so wildly and so loud that Willie, who slept beside him, was alarmed and called for Maggie. She came barefooted from the adjoining room and stood by the bedside, but her father did not know her. The fever of his wound, acting on a system charged with alcoholic poison, had produced acute delirium, and for many days Moray Browne hovered between life and death.

At last the fever was conquered, and he lay, conscious once more, but weak as a little child, and scarce able to lift to his lips the food that his daughter prepared for him. Each evening, throughout his illness, as soon as seven o'clock arrived, good-natured Mrs. Pottersby took Maggie's place at his bedside, and, taking the violin, the boy and girl went forth on their nightly quest. With the money thus obtained, the poor household fared better than it had done for some time past, even though it had to bear the added burden of the father's illness. Grave and silent, the sick man lay, thoughtfully watching the thin form of his daughter as she flitted about his chamber, and tracing, with tardy remorse, the growing likeness to her dead mother, ere lost hope and a broken heart had fretted her life away. By slow degrees he gathered strength, and Maggie lived in hourly dread of hearing him ask for the brandy that had been his bane; but, to her infinite relief, the request was never spoken. During his long hours of convalescence, Moray Browne had passed through a fiery trial, and had determined that, with God's help, he would never touch alcohol again. It was a hard struggle, but the period of enforced abstinence had cooled the fire in his blood, and made it seem more possible for him to refrain. At last the sick man had so far recovered as to be able to go out of doors, once more. He took his violin, and Maggie saw him depart with a sinking heart, for she knew too well, by sad experience, what his return might be. He did not come home till late at night, but to her delight and surprise, he was perfectly sober, and emptied out the money in his pocket, amounting to some four or five shillings, chiefly in coppers, on the table.

"Here, Maggie," he said, "here is some money for your housekeeping. You and Willie must go out no more."

"Oh, father! You have never——"

She stopped short, but he answered her thought.

"Why not? If you and Willie could do it, why not I?"

"Oh, father," said Maggie, with tearful eyes, feeling a shame for him she had never done for herself, "you, such a great musician, to play in the streets; it is too dreadful."

"Not so very dreadful, child, if by so doing I can gain an honest living for myself and you, and perhaps—some day—a hope of pardon. My life is wrecked, beyond redemption. But yours shall not be, if I can help it. Take the violin, and let me hear you play. Play!"—his voice quivered—"play that old anthem of mine you sang in——Street the other night."

Maggie looked up in wonder to find him so well informed. She made, however, no reply, but

producing an old brown-paper covered manuscript book, opened it at the required place. Her father took the book, and looked at it with some curiosity, for he had in truth forgotten its very existence. The anthem was but a fragment, only the opening solo and duet having been written. He had intended to develop the theme into a noble chorus, but this intention had never been carried out. With the rapid appreciation of the skilled musician, he glanced over the part completed. "Ah, I had genius in those days," he said with a sigh. "I must try to finish it some day. Now, child, let me hear what you can do."

And so the days went on. Each evening Moray Browne went forth with his violin, returning late at night, and always handing every penny of his earnings to his "little housekeeper." Once Maggie urged him to keep some part for himself, but he replied, almost fiercely, "Don't tempt me, child." She understood too well his meaning, and never ventured to make such a suggestion again. After a few weeks he came home with the welcome news that he had obtained an engagement, and thenceforth, to Maggie's delight, the street performances became a thing of the past. From this point the fortunes of the family began steadily to mend. (Clothing and other articles which had been pledged for food were gradually redeemed, and after a little while they were able to move into a more comfortable lodging, and—crowning delight to Maggie—even to hire a piano.

Three several times Moray Browne sat down to complete his unfinished anthem, but in vain. The rich musical fancy, the mystic faculty whereby a theme had been wont to wed itself instinctively in his brain to subtle harmonies, was lost for ever. By sheer force of his musical knowledge he could have completed the missing number, but he felt that it would be but a poor and heartless work. The "touch of the vanished hand," the "tender grace of the days that were dead," would never come to him again on this side the grave. And so, with a sigh, he gave up the attempt. He put the unfinished manuscript back in the dusty drawer, and determined thenceforth to devote all his energies to the development of the talents of his children. Willie possessed a sweet voice and a good ear, but he had no special love for music; and, after a short season of experiment, a more congenial occupation was found for him. With Maggie, on the other hand, music was the central fact of her existence, and in her, her father found renewed the noble gifts of which he himself had made so poor a use. With passionate ardour he devoted himself to the work of her education, and in due time had the happiness to hear her *début*, and to witness her triumph as a Queen of Song. That done, it seemed as if the task of his life was over. For some time past he had been ailing. His frame had been growing thinner, his cheeks hollow and hectic, and it was soon only too clear that consumption had set its seal upon him. For some few months he lingered, daily growing weaker and weaker, till one morning his daughter, on coming to his bedside, found that he did not know her, and saw that the end was near. For a while he lay in silence, breathing heavily, and apparently unconscious. Then as Maggie watched, he seemed to rouse himself for a moment. The thin white fingers wandered over the coverlet, and framed

themselves into the chords of the unfinished anthem. A far-away look came into the dying man's eyes, and his lips softly moved. Maggie bent eagerly forward to catch the parting sound. The strain of joy and hope was with him in his dying hour, and the last words of the broken-down musician were "abundant pardon!"

WITH THE HIGHLAND SMUGGLERS.

BY J. M. BARRIE.

LOOKING around him from a ramshackle, ungainly fishing boat off Shildaig, in Ross-shire, one cannot avoid the feeling (unless he belongs to the preventive staff) that, so long as there are Loch Torridone, it is fit and proper that there should be smugglers. They are complement and supplement. The loch, as easily roused to violence as a passionate man, lies dark and threatening between ragged shores, the ground around being appropriately wet and boggy. Every facility for distillation, with the exception of the utensils themselves, abounds in the district—from bothies in a wilderness of marsh to streams and springs—and there has never been a lack of smugglers. The ghosts of the fraternity are said to come from all quarters to haunt the gloomy loch.

There was much talk of an expected raid by the Jeantown "gaugers" the day we touched at Deabeag and Torridon; and on the steamer we were unanimous that the smuggler's chief difficulties in so bleak a district would be in getting his malt and barley and disposing of the surplus whisky. It had not struck us that we had the malt and barley with us in the vessel when we entered the loch, and that the whisky would probably be on board when we steamed out of it.

It was a cold, calm night when the search party—consisting of the officers and myself, a ready volunteer—rowed out cautiously, but with vigour, from near Shildaig, to make a scrutiny of the northern side of the loch. The secrecy with which I had expected the expedition to be conducted was altogether wanting, many of the natives sharing my expectation of a sensational adventure, and a few genially accompanying us to the place of embarkation. Such publicity was apparently unavoidable, owing to the familiarity of the people with the faces of the officers, and the fact that the latter had to borrow or take forcible possession of whatever boats they used. It is a far cry—as the Government will perhaps in time discover—from Loch Torridon to Gairloch and Jeantown, the nearest stations.

A little labour would convert some of the wave-washed jutties of Loch Torridon into very passable piers for small boats; but the men of Ross launch their clumsy cockleshells from the most inconvenient places, and when one is a gauger in the Highlands he finds it advisable to conform to Highland customs. The officers waded through the shallow water to the boat, rather than waste a few minutes in bringing it up to the rocks; and, with a dubious glance at my elegant knickerbockers, I prepared to follow them. Suddenly a strong arm pressed my waist, and the next moment I was flung heavily rather than carried into the boat.

The officers pushed off without a word, but there was a laugh from the shore, where I saw the strong man the centre of an admiring group. I subsequently learned that this slovenly, hulking giant was one of the most notorious poachers in the district (albeit a native of Skye), and consequently presume that he was on this occasion striking at his natural enemies through their friend.

Mooring our boat at a point where the loch takes a sudden and (from the seaman's point of view) ugly turn, we struck off from it at right angles, and fought our way briskly up a burn side. No other word would sufficiently suggest the difficulties in our path, for at first the way was barred by jagged rocks—most deceptive of objects on a moonlight night—over which we stumbled and fell; and we only left these behind us to plunge recklessly into a soaking morass. From the first it was a night of disappointments. So long as we believed ourselves on the smugglers' track, a scratched knee or a tumble into a bog was borne cheerily; but the moment the gaugers began to feel that they had fallen into a trap, our wet boots grew heavy as lead, and stuck, clammy and sodden, in the yielding marsh.

The officers had received apparently valuable information to the effect that a bothy was in active work on the opposite shore; but though we had no difficulty in discovering the bothy, which was already known to the gaugers by repute, a cursory examination showed plainly that distillation there was a thing of the remote past. Once again the natives, though reputed honest enough folk themselves, had proved their sympathy with the smugglers by purposely misleading the gauger. My companions grumbled and ground their teeth with vexation.

During the greater part of the day they had been engaged in an unsuccessful search over the famous smuggling ground around Shildaig; and it was gall and wormwood to think that they had now fallen into a trap on the one side of the island while the process of distillation was doubtless in full swing on the other. There was a stampede to the place where we had disembarked, and a roar of mingled rage and anguish when we found that the boat had been removed. Even the Mark Tapley of the party hung his head, and all that I could suggest was that we might yet lay hold of another boat.

"Yes," a gauger growled, sulkily seating himself on a stone, "if you can run across for it to Shildaig."

No certain lights were visible in the distant hamlets, but the stars were out, and the placid loch regarded us with a thousand alluring eyes. All else was black and indistinct, the further side of the loch swallowed up in the rocky coast that loomed in strong shadow straight in front, now almost overhanging us till we shrank back in dread, the next moment but a dim cloud joining earth with heaven.

Strange were the tricks imagination played even the practical officers of the preventive staff. In the eerie stillness of the night one of them maintained that the jeering laugh of the smugglers was carried to him across the loch; and the lights of heaven were taken for candles burning in the bothy. But by the footsore and weary gauger, depressed with much tramping, a hard stone tends

to become a pillow, and to sleep by the edge of Loch Torridon through a cold night, is more perilous than a brush with smugglers. We rose wearily, and set out for a cluster of houses, supposed to lie on the shore of the loch a few miles further inland. There was just a possibility of our contriving to seize a boat there and recross the loch, otherwise our search was over for the night.

So quiet was the neighbourhood when we left the shore to thread our way along the drier knolls of the boggy ground, that the winding up of my watch caused the gauger in advance to call a stop, and such the nervous state into which the unusual circumstances had flung me, that with the others I stood for a moment on the defensive. A scowl passed from one face to another as the cause of alarm was made known, after which we resumed our journey.

The district is strongly Free Kirk, and my friends, except in the matter of illicit distillation, were imbued with local sympathies. Though all hope of effecting a seizure had gone from us, habit made them drop their voices, when they favoured me with reminiscences of their smartness, to a whisper, and nothing short of the name of Robertson Smith could electrify them into fervent ejaculations and stormy action. But the Robertson Smith heresy case had pursued me since I crossed the border, and firmly but calmly I turned the conversation into a less worn channel.

Smuggling, I learned, was still a favourite pursuit in the north-west highlands, and the night's experience no bad sample of the trials and disappointments with which the gauger had to contend. Seizures are not infrequent; but a lonely loch like Torridon, with its marshes, burns, and crevices, all difficult of access, will never be swept clear of smugglers so long as the nearest stations are at Jeantown and Gairloch (as is still the case). A gauger settled at Shildaig would doubtless be able to crush the trade underfoot; but at present the authorities are satisfied when their knives cut the nettle level with the ground. No attempt has as yet been made to root it up. But although illicit distillation is still carried on briskly, and there are shebeens in the district, it is in but a small way. The glory of the trade departed with the opening up of the Highlands; and the impetuous, slovenly smuggler of to-day, running from his squalid shieling with a whisky cask in his hand, the gauger at his uncovered heels, resembles as little the armed hordes of powerful Highlanders that used contemptuously to hustle the representatives of the law out of their way, as the whining Scotch tinker recalls the Eddie Ochiltrees of the gaberlunzie period.

The stories of still-heads found buried in marshes, and artful passages beneath apparently disused bothies, were well enough; but it was a dismal, fatiguing trudge nevertheless—our earlier experience of the bog ten times intensified. Thinly-shod for such delving, I had been specially glad to leave the rocks and stones; but my boots "cheeped" and clung to the softer soil like a boy's sucker. Part of our route lay through a moss than can be best described as an expanse of shallow black water, dotted with tiny tufts of grass; and it was along the latter that we had to jump rather than stride our way. A more tiresome journey could not be imagined, our feet every other

minute slipping into the water, whence they were not always withdrawn without a muttered oath, and firm ground was not reached before I had left my pipe behind me in the bog as a trifling and much regretted souvenir. Before we arrived at the nearest shieling, where we were welcomed with true Highland hospitality, we noted without complacency our boat riding quietly at anchor in the loch, bereft, of course, of its oars. The sight was not a pleasant one for my companions, who were sensitive to ridicule; but they slept, nevertheless, the sound sleep of the weary baffled.

Next day I struck Torridon and departed overland for Auchnasheen, leaving the officers to try their luck on the other side of the loch alone. Curiously enough, I afterwards heard that their only important seizure was made unusually far inland, on the north side after all.

THROUGH STORM AND SHINE.

BY M. F. THEED.

CHAPTER XII.

AT LAST

I HAD not the time to go for her, and, indeed, there was no need. She had only one change of carriage all the way through, and they had little enough luggage—these two. It was no fashionable lady who was coming on a visit to us in the Elm Tree Road; but for all that, it was a woman worth the looking at—a woman not unworthy of the promise of her girlhood; a little too prim and stiff in manner, a little too grave in expression for her years, but still with a fine face of her own, and a carriage which no dancing-master or mistress in the wide world could have given her.

She walked like a duchess, said simple Mrs. Burney, who, somehow, was so impressed by her appearance and a certain dignity there was about her, that she quite forgot to patronize and pity her, as she was prepared to do. I am afraid at first there was a little disappointment both on her part and on Lucy's. The gentle souls were so sorry for her, and so eager to entertain and amuse her, that her quiet, self-contained manner carried a chill with it she never meant it should. Often, too, during these first days, I blamed myself for all I had said to Lucy in praise of Phillis, and to Phillis in favour of Lucy; for whether they were disappointed in each other, or afraid of each other's perfections, I could not tell. As to Lucy's mother, there might be, as I knew, another and perhaps a better founded reason for an absence of enthusiasm on her part. I did not flatter myself that the warmer regard I had come of late to feel for Phillis was a secret known to myself only. I knew, whether she chose to ignore it or not, it was visible enough to any one who saw us together, and I seemed past caring who saw and who did not. From the moment she had acknowledged with her own lips the possibility of Lawrence's having forgotten her, I had allowed a hope that I might yet one day take his place in her heart to steal into mine, and it had grown in the months which had elapsed since then into

dimensions which would have astonished me could I have realized them.

And I could quite understand that, as my future wife, the divinest woman that ever walked would hardly have been welcome to the Burneys.

I had been putting by money now for a good many years, and who so likely to come in for it, so long as I remained unmarried, as Lucy?

I doubt whether Phillis gave a thought to it. She gradually got the better of her coldness, which indeed had only been superficial from the first, and then, fortunately for all of us, there was Dick. He was so delighted with his new friends, and with all that was done for his amusement, that he was the petted tyrant of the establishment before he had made one of it two days; and they could not but laugh together over his quaint words and ways. Wherever we went we took Lucy with us, and Dick kept so close to her (having taken a fancy to her, which must have been a trial at times to his rightful owner), and Phillis, in her turn, so close to him, it seemed as if I never should get a chance of saying what I wished to say to my guest.

I should have made the opportunity ten years before. A man has not the assurance at forty he has before he gets bald.

I was destined, however, to have my opening, and it came in the form of a letter from Mr. Needham. A tenant, whom he thought eligible, had offered for the farm, and he wrote to know what was Phillis' pleasure about it. The letter was given to me—given without a comment.

"Well," I said, when I had read it, "it rests with yourself, Phillis. It is hard for any one to advise you. You have had more than a year's experience of the life, since your father died—winter and summer—and you know best whether it is the life you would like to go on leading or not."

"I don't think I could ever stand another winter there," she said.

"And there is no reason you should," I replied; "so we may look upon that as settled, and tell Mr. Needham to close with his tenant, if his tenant is all right, as soon as he can. When could you give him possession, Phillis?"

She was looking at me in a dazed sort of way, rather as if I were talking Hindustani than English. She had thought about letting the farm, and talked about it long enough; but to have it settled for her in a moment, as it were, was more than she had bargained for.

"Michaelmas, I suppose," she said; "I could not get out before, and even that would be a rush."

"He wants it on a longish lease," I said, referring to the letter. "Do you suppose he would take the furniture?"

"I can't tell at all," she replied, listlessly. "How can I? You know as much as I do. I should sell the furniture, all but the old dressing-table. I shall never part with that. And then there comes the old vexed question: where to go to? Nobody ever seems to take that into consideration," she added, with a forlorn little laugh, "excepting me. Neither Mr. Needham nor you nor even Mattie."

"What if I have taken it more into consideration than you give me credit for?" I exclaimed, seizing my opportunity and speaking very fast. "What if I have been dreaming, night and day,

for the last six months, of nothing else? What if my high days and holidays have been spent—as they have been spent—wandering about in this wilderness of brick and mortar in search of something pretty enough and modest enough and retired enough for you and Dick, and yet not too out-of-the-world and out-of-the-way for a homely hard-working man of business like me? What of that, my dear, what of that?"

She made no answer; but the tears gathered slowly in her eyes and her lip quivered. I thought I saw my advantage and pressed it.

"What is to hinder it, Phillis?" I urged eagerly. "What is to come in our way? Surely not that forlorn hope which has stood between you and your happiness, between me and mine, without my knowing it all this long while! Surely not that any longer. I don't say that I am good enough for you, my dear. I don't say that you might not do better if there were others whom you knew, and who knew you as well as I do; but I do say that there is nobody living who could love you better, that there is nobody living who would do more for you, and not for you only but for the little one. I'd be a father to him, Phillis—" As surely I was going to say as a husband to her; but she stopped me there, laying her hand on my arm and shaking her head.

"No, no," she said. "I know all you can tell me. I know you would be better than good to Dick and me; there is nothing new in that; you are that already. And I know, too, if there were anything I could do to add to your happiness it would be my bounden duty to do it; but you must forgive me if this that you are asking me I can't do, knowing that it is that I can't, not that I won't. Knowing that my heart and my conscience say, 'No, not whilst he is alive; not whilst there is a chance that he is alive and waiting.' Knowing that, and knowing, too, that but for that—" She broke off suddenly there, as if uncertain whether to say any more; but there was something in my face, I think, that made her finish it in spite of herself, something that forced from her the confession, which was all the comfort she had to give me. "Never think"—the words were murmured rather than spoken, but my ears were quick to hear them, my memory quick to retain them—"Never think," she said, "that I don't love you. Never doubt for a moment that but for that—"

"Say it out, Phillis," I groaned. "You need not grudge me so much, at any rate. It is only a 'but,' but it may be big enough to keep us apart to the end of our days, and to spoil all the rest of our lives, as it has spoiled the best part of yours already."

"How can I help it?" she said. "Prove to me that he is alive and that he has forgotten me—prove to me even that he is dead"—a shudder ran through her, as she uttered the word—"and I shall feel myself free. Not until then—never until then. If I don't feel as sure as I did, if I think at times now, as I never did think, that he may not have kept his promise to me as I have kept mine to him—remember it may be only I who think it—I may be wronging him, remember, and because I doubt his being worthy of my trust, would you have me show myself unworthy of his? What change did you think had come over me that, after all I had said and done, I should go

and belie myself so? Was it likely? Was it possible? That you, of all people, should have thought such a thing of me!"

"If it had appeared to me such a terrible thing to think, I should not have thought it, Phillis."

It was all that I said; but she felt the reproach, as I meant she should, and she reached suddenly forward from her seat and—I am ashamed to tell it, but in this place I must—she seized my hand and kissed it.

"God bless you!" she cried. "You are too good for me, and I cause you nothing but trouble—first one way and then another. But indeed, indeed, I never meant it. And I will do all and anything you wish, *but that one thing*. You shall choose the house—here in London—anywhere you like—next door, if you please—where you can come to us very often—Dick and me—and it shall be just like your own to run in and out of, and we shall never go anywhere or do anything without asking you, and we shall never feel lonely, summer or winter again!"

There was something almost childlike in the earnestness with which she pleaded, striving, with all the eloquence at her command, to atone for her offence; but, after all, I had asked for bread and she had given me a stone, and I was very sore with her.

"You forget," I said, "how little I am in London, after all. I might see you once a week—enough to see that you came to no great harm, it is true; scarcely enough for me to profit by a second home."

"Perhaps not," she said demurely, "*or by a wife*."

It was not an unnatural retort, though it was provoking she should be in the mood to make it; but I had an answer at my command she had not reckoned upon.

"Certainly not," I returned coldly, "I had other views in prospect and another life—a city life—before me, when I thought of taking a wife."

She looked up with a face full of inquiry.

"And now?" she said.

"Now I shall remain as I am, and where I am. I shall be happier going the old round on the old treadmill than I should be any other way."

She made no answer to that. She did not venture to suggest a second time the pleasure to be found in running in and out, and being at home with her and Dick, and she never so much as asked me what it was that had been offered me in exchange for my old occupation. That it was a good thing and a lucrative thing, one that, in any other mood than my present one, I should have been only too glad to close with, neither my pride nor my temper permitted me to tell her.

"You are not going to be cross with me," she said presently. "If it were only for pity's sake, you could never quarrel with me! I have nobody to go to if you do, and you will help me just the same, and forget—try and forget—that it ever crossed your mind that I had altered from my old self and become like other people. We might have lodgings, perhaps, Dick and I and Mattie—just to begin with—and then we could look out and—you'll forgive me, won't you?"

So it was all over, and nobody was any the worse for it but me, and there are those who would say I was an old fool, and deserved what I got for having fallen in love, at my time of life, at all. I

said it to myself, but it did not make the pain any easier, or the mortification any less, and I was anxious for Phillis to go, and for my holiday to be over, so as to begin the "forgetting" as soon as I could.

I managed to escape some of the sight-seeing, which, wearisome work as it is when the sights are all old to one, had never wearied *me* whilst it amused *her*, and I had that hope in my heart, the first half of that last week of her stay with us; but there was one place to which I was bound to go by my promise to Dick, a promise which, child-like, he never forgot from the moment I made it, and never allowed me to forget either.

We had been to the Tower, to Madame Tussaud's, to the Crystal Palace; we had seen performing dogs, and performing fleas, and happy families, a real live giant, and a good many more wonders that were not so genuine, but there was a fairy play going on at the Haymarket, and partly because of the fairy element, partly because there was a morning performance of it, Phillis had consented, for this once, to take the child to the theatre.

Had she alone been concerned, she would never now, I think, have suggested going anywhere or seeing anything. She was no easier—though she may, without difficulty, have been happier than I was—and but for the fear of giving further offence, where she had already given too much, she would have found some pretext or other—no matter how shallow—for returning home before the time. But Dick—poor little innocent!—had no notion either of losing his fun, or of any reason there was for it. So, no matter at what cost to the feelings of us grown people, the programme of Phillis's visit had to be carried out in its entirety.

Putting it off to the last available day, we found our numbers diminished, when the time came, to Phillis, the child, and myself. Mrs. Burney was poorly, and some country cousins had invited themselves for the day, so Lucy could not be spared. I could not, and Phillis dared not, suggest that we should give it up—and, indeed, it would have been cruelty to animals to propose so traitorous a proceeding by Dick—standing, with his bright eyes and rosy cheeks, and long yellow curls—a radiant figure, in spite of his black clothes—in an ecstasy of anticipation, which had positively reduced him to silence, waiting to be dressed. I felt, rather than knew, as the moments flew by after Lucy's final rejection of all the eloquence which had been brought to bear on her, that Phillis' earnest eyes were wandering from Dick to me, and from me to Dick, in a great perplexity. It was not destined to last, however, Dick took care of that.

Was it time to go, he wanted to know? Would I tell *aunt* it was time to go? He was so bent upon the going himself that he did not much mind who went or who remained behind, even his pet Lucy.

"It is so good of you to be troubled with us," Phillis said, meekly, as they left the room; but I made as if I did not hear her. Was she not as well aware as I was that I could not help myself?

It was not until we were safely in our places, and the gas was full on, and the whole thing in train, we recovered ourselves at all. The kind of thing had a charm for us both, and it was by such a long, long way the most beautiful spectacle Phillis had ever seen; it would have required the

wettest of wet blankets to have put her enjoyment quite out. And the child was enchanted—in itself an enchantment to her. It was the prettiest thing in the world, and though much of its delicate humour was lost on the child, it was pleasant to note how fully it was appreciated and enjoyed by the quiet, self-contained woman at my side. And to Phillis and the child beside her, the stage was, for the time being, Fairyland itself; the men and women upon it were not actors and actresses, but princes and princesses—ideal only in their beauty and their gallantry. Powder and paint and padding! These things entered no more into the mind of the woman than into that of the child; and the very trail of their silks and satins, as they swept the boards, had a curious fascination for eyes so unaccustomed to glare and glitter of any kind.

But if *my* children were delighted, other people's were not less so, and presently I found Dick, in the intervals between the acts, exchanging furtive glances and "nods and becks and wreathed smiles" with somebody of his own size, but not of his own sex, in the stage box. I don't know which had begun it, but I should think the lady, for she was evidently the more audacious of the two; but whenever the principal entertainment hung fire this minor amusement was fallen back upon with the greatest gusto upon both sides. She was a born coquette, pretty little child as she was, and I think she was more intent on her flirtation, kissing her hand to Dick and pulling her little brother to call his attention to it than on anything else that was going on. There were two ladies in the box, one a coarse, elderly woman, who would have looked more in her place in the pit; the other, whom I took for the mother of the children, a younger and refined likeness of her companion. Neither paid much attention to the little ones; but now and then one or the other would lean back and address somebody in the background, who seemed quite content to remain there, and to let the performance go on without him.

It was more than half through when Dick was caught by his aunt, hitherto apparently unconscious of his little game, vigorously blowing kisses to his *incognita*. Her eyes, sparkling with amusement (I was glad, even in my own anger and trouble, that the sparkle had come back to them) met mine for a moment as they followed Dick's. There was no mistaking the direction *they* took, for the little lady was repaying his attentions with interest, and Phillis fairly laughed. I caught her looking again and again after that, and then by-and-by, the curtain falling upon the last act but one, I heard her whisper to Dick to kiss his hand nicely this time to the pretty little girl.

Is there, I wonder, in all our lives such a thing as chance? I would submit not—I would ask of you all to believe as I believe—that it was no blind chance, but the very hand of Providence itself that led Phillis Merritt at that moment to raise her soft eyes once more to follow little Dick's to the stage-box.

Mine were on *her*; she looked at that moment so handsome and so animated that eyes less fond than mine would have dwelt upon her face with pleasure. It was for a moment only. The next, whilst I was looking, all the light and colour faded out of it, and she stood (for we had risen to ease our cramped limbs) white and motion-

less, staring with parted lips and straining eyes, not at the child, smiling and signalling to Dick in delighted recognition of his adieux, but at the child's father. So unmistakably her father, so wonderfully like her that the most surprising part of it all to me, when I saw the two faces together, was that the little girl's, at her first sight of it, had not fascinated Phillis by its resemblance to that, the memory of which she had treasured up so fondly in her faithful heart for so many years.

I did not recognize George Lawrence—how should I? I had only seen him once in my life, and then but for a few moments; but I could see that there was something amiss with Phillis, and I knew *him* a moment after by his recognition of her.

He was looking full at us, his attention having been directed to us, no doubt, by the child, and a light which transformed his grave face—grave almost to moroseness—came over it as he looked. He bent eagerly forward, and as he did so, Phillis fell, rather than sank, back into her seat.

She was not the woman to make a scene, though, perhaps, she was nearer doing so at that moment than at any other time in her life. She said nothing even to me, but as she took the smelling-bottle from my hand, she raised her eyes to mine, with the question her lips could not or would not frame shining in them.

"Would you like to speak to him, Phillis?" I said, by way of answer.

She shook her head, whilst a sudden swift colour swept over her face.

"Is there much more of this?" she asked nervously. "Shall we have to stay to the end?"

"We can get out now if you like," I said. "But the curtain will rise again directly, and we ought to try and make our way past before it does."

"I don't see anybody going," she said, looking furtively round. "Would it look very odd if we went?"

The words were scarcely out of her mouth, when a hand was laid lightly on my shoulder, and she was answered—but not by me. The voice she had been hungering for all these years sounded once again in her ears.

"Go, without speaking to me, Phillis?" it said half reproachfully, half banteringly. "Is that the new way of treating old friends? And an old friend, who is so glad to see you, to boot! I thought I should never make my way round to you fast enough. The wife thought there was something the matter with me, and wondered what I was after, running off like a madman with Connie. I brought Connie to introduce her to your little boy. But I am waiting for my own introduction. I am not certain—my memory plays me false at times—but I think I had the pleasure of meeting your husband long ago?"

He had got so far, talking fast and excitedly, and still holding in his own the passive hand which had been given him, before we could stop him. What *she* looked like I could not tell, I did not look at her; but my own face, middle-aged man though I was, was burning.

"You are labouring under a mistake, Mr. Lawrence," I said. "You have seen me before, but you see me in no new character, and you see Miss Merritt in none. She is Miss Merritt still, and this"—and I made Dick, shyer at close

quarters than he had been at a distance, turn round and confront them—"is her nephew—the son of her half-brother."

He coloured and laughed a little, profuse in his apologies, and Phillis echoed the laugh faintly.

"I took it for granted," he said, "seeing you all together; it seemed such a natural conclusion to arrive at. Had I met you a week later, I should have known better, for I am going down to your old part of the country, and there I should have found out all about you. Are you still living there?" he asked her.

She told him yes; she was living there alone now, with the child; and then she told him quite composedly, I was pleased to see, as she might have told anybody else whom she had known long ago, all that had happened to her, and how this was her first visit to London and to us. He cast up his eyes a little, and laughed and nodded, as much as to say what a life it was she had led. It was his wife's first visit, too, he said; but then she was an American, and he could show her nothing to surprise her. He had brought her over for good; but whether she would be satisfied to stay he did not know, and he cared very little himself where he lived. Yes—in answer to Phillis—he liked America; he had every reason to like it; he had done very well there; he owed his start in life out there to his wife's father, and now the old man was dead, and his widow lived with them, and very good she was to them, and to the children. There were only the two—Connie and the boy. The boy, if Phillis had noticed him, was like his mother—fair and plump. She was getting a little too plump, he was afraid.

"She won't wear as well as you are doing," he added, with a laugh; "though she ought to—better, being so fair. You are handsomer than ever—if an old friend may venture to say so much—a deal too handsome to be shut up down in Yorkshire. You should bring her up to London, Mr. Francis, for good. I can't think what you have been about all this time not to have done it before!"

He said it word for word, as I have written it, though, if she could, she would have disbelieved her own ears, and I knew she would—though, without any need of looking at her, I knew how the colour was coming and going in her face; now her eyes were looking anywhere—anywhere away from me. But I was scarcely prepared for her taking it upon herself—as she did take it—to answer him.

"I am thinking of coming to London to live," she said quietly; "I have been thinking of it for a long time, ever since father died. If you should come down into the country before I give up the farm, I shall be glad to see you and your wife. Perhaps you will tell her so," she added; "but now I must keep you no longer. They are all coming back to their places," and, with that, she wished him good-bye.

She could not have done it better—she could not have given him his *congé* with more coolness and self-possession, had he never been more to her than she had been to him.

We sat the performance out, but I could not tell you—if I were to be paid for it—what it was about, and I do not think Phillis could. She was

very grave and quiet, scarcely answering the child, who was too full of open-eyed wonderment to mind her much, when he spoke to her, and talking to me not at all. But, presently, when it was all over, and the curtain fell on the final *tableau*, she turned to me with a half pathetic, half amused smile, and uttered the thought that was in her mind—

"If I had only met him in the Palace of Truth years ago!"

There is very little more to be said. My courtship may be said to have been over, though my love-making had scarcely begun, and will only end, please God, with her life or mine. I had loved her so long, and borne with her so patiently, so she said, that it was only fair she should meet me half way at the end; and she did—yes, she did. But I should never have felt for her quite what I have felt and do feel, never had quite the confidence in her caring for me, had it not been for the avowal she made me, the day when she trampled all my hopes underfoot, and made her last offering at the shrine of her first love.

"Never think for a moment that I don't love you. Never doubt for a moment that but for that—"

No other words she has ever spoken have drowned the music of those in the heart she had almost broken when she uttered them; nothing she could ever have said would have unsaid them. George Lawrence's return did indeed give me my wife; but her heart had ceased to be his to give or hers to withhold long before.

THE END.

FOOD REFORM.

(BY A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY).

I PROPOSE, in this article, to describe very briefly the objects and aims of some of the chief vegetarian organizations in this country, and to state the main arguments which are brought forward in favour of a vegetarian diet. First and foremost, I must mention the Vegetarian Society itself, which was established in 1847 and has its headquarters in Manchester. Its object is to inculcate entire abstinence from flesh-food, and those only can be members who actually adopt the reformed system; though there is also a grade of "associates" who agree to promote the doctrines of the society without binding themselves to strict personal adherence. The President of the Vegetarian Society is now Professor Mayor, the well-known Cambridge scholar, who succeeded Professor F. W. Newman a few months ago. The organ of the society is the "Dietetic Reformer," which is published monthly in Manchester and London. Next in importance to the Vegetarian Society is the "National Food Reform Society" of London, whose objects are to promote the use of fruits, seeds, grains, and other products of the vegetable kingdom as essential articles of diet, and also to advocate total abstinence from flesh. The "Food Reform Magazine" is published quarterly in London. In addition to these two central societies, there are also minor provincial organizations in many large towns, such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Salford,

Chester, etc. Vegetarian restaurants are now becoming fairly numerous, there being eight in London, three in Manchester, and one or more in Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Bristol, Leicester, and Nottingham. In many cases the vegetarians are working hand in hand with the Temperance party; the "Danielites," for instance, are a society pledged to the reformed doctrines, both in food and drink, while the "Herald of Health" and various other papers, have often advocated vegetarian principles.

The arguments which food reformers bring forward in urging the disuse of a flesh diet may be briefly given under three heads. First, they assert that the slaughter of animals for food is not consistent with the large and humane spirit of a true civilization; secondly, that a non-flesh diet is more conducive to sound bodily health; thirdly, that there is an immense economical advantage in the vegetarian system. Now, as regards the first of these arguments, I will only say this—I do not think it can be denied that there is something in the slaughterhouse and its appurtenances, which all of us who have any regard for humanity—and who has not?—would be glad to dispense with. A butcher's shop is not a pleasant sight; the butcher's trade is not a pleasant one to contemplate even in thought; indeed, it is obvious that the system of the slaughterhouse is only tolerated because of the wide-spread belief that animal food is absolutely necessary for the support of man. It is precisely this belief that vegetarians challenge as being baseless and irrational; and therefore, I will pass on to the second of the three arguments, the assertion that a fleshless diet is not only as good, but actually better, in respect of physical strength. And here I must at once admit that we vegetarians are at conflict on this point with the majority of the medical profession. There is certainly a large preponderance, though by no means unanimity of opinion among medical men in favour of a mixed diet; and though they have nothing whatever in the way of conclusive proof to bring forward, yet the mere weight of their opinion is naturally a great obstacle to the progress of vegetarian ideas. It is, in fact, a question on which no absolutely precise or scientific testimony can be forthcoming; it cannot be *proved* one way or the other by any theoretical arguments, but must be left to the decision of that one infallible criterion, practical experience. All that Food Reformers ask is that their system may have a fair trial; that being granted, they are confident that the recognition of the great practical benefit which results from the adoption of a fleshless diet must in the end triumph over all preconceived ideas. It is the old story of the Temperance movement over again; a reform which at first meets with nothing but scorn and ridicule, which is condemned by doctors as unscientific and impossible, is found on trial to be not only perfectly practicable and feasible, but in the highest degree beneficial and salutary. Thus it is now with vegetarianism; hundreds who have tried it will bear witness (as I myself can, after five years' experience) to the immense benefit which the bodily health derives from this simple and frugal method of living, which has none of the exciting and stimulating qualities of flesh food, but induces a calm, strong, and equable habit of body,

together with far clearer and more vigorous powers of mind. In short, let those of my readers who have a will, *try* for a month or two the reformed method of diet, and they will soon learn to smile at the admonitions of chemists and doctors.

I said that I regarded this question, the physical aspect of vegetarianism, as one that can never be settled by any scientific authority, but only by practical experience. But I by no means meant to imply that the weight of scientific authority is entirely against the advocates of Food Reform—on the contrary, though the majority of the medical men of the present day are hostile to vegetarian doctrines, there is very weighty testimony borne by Linnæus, Cuvier, Ray, and a host of later authorities as to the frugivorous nature of man; the teeth, which are so often foolishly alluded to, as an indication of our carnivorous origin, have been shown again and again to be wholly unlike those of the carnivora; whereas the apes, who are nearest to man in bodily structure, are acknowledged to be frugivorous. Again, though ferocity is certainly a characteristic of the carnivora, it should not be forgotten that *strength* is chiefly found in the vegetable feeders; the elephant and rhinoceros build up their mighty frames without the assistance of flesh-food; the horse, the ox, and all the domestic animals whose strength is serviceable to man, are by nature vegetarians; in short, there are innumerable indications of the fact that the purest, most wholesome, and most nourishing food for man may be obtained direct from the bountiful hand of nature, without any admixture of blood and slaughter. There are innumerable indications of this, though, as I said before, there is no absolute theoretic proof; and for this reason I must end as I began, by asking my readers to take the word of no medical man on this subject, but to study it and try it for themselves.

The third advantage claimed by vegetarians for their system is one about which there is happily no doubt whatever. It is an indisputable fact that an enormous saving is effected by the disuse of flesh-food, and this is a consideration which is becoming more and more urgent and important, at a time when our food-supply is giving rise to the gravest anxiety. Every householder knows to his cost that the butcher's bill is the most serious item of the weekly account, and the annual cost to the nation of the breeding, rearing, transit, and slaughtering of animals is something immense. All this expense might be avoided if we were only content to draw our food direct from the vegetable world, instead of first transforming it into an inferior animal. An abundance of cheap and wholesome food is always within our reach; but unfortunately, the majority of us prefer to starve in the midst of plenty, and to spend on the useless and questionable luxury of flesh-meat the hardly-earned sum which might purchase an ample supply of vegetarian fare. If only for its economy, Food Reform is well worthy of the serious consideration of all earnest and hard-working men.

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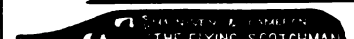


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VOL. II. No. 21.]

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A GAME OF CHANCE.

BY HORACE VICKARS REES,

Author of "At the Sign of the Silver Bells," &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

"MY dear doctor, you are positively refreshing! Quite original, I declare!"

"Hardly, Eva. I am only a little tired—tired of this atrocious world, like many another jaded creature."

The first speaker laughed, and a very finished piece of art the laugh was, low, musical, and suggestive, and affording her companion an advantageous view of her faultless teeth. It was just possible, by the way, that these latter were also a finished piece of art, to judge by their intense perfection, but this was a small matter, for Eva Frothingley was still a very handsome woman, even leaving the suspicious teeth out of the question. A shade *passé*, perhaps, to some hypercritics of feminine beauty, but her experience gave her knowledge, the which she used to the best advantage. She knew perfectly the art of pleasing, that most difficult of worldly accomplishments: it had been her life-long study, and she had mastered it.

A dangerous woman, though, you might surmise, as you marked the treacherous flashing of the sea-green eyes beneath the curling mass of golden hair and the quick gleams that now and again shot out from beneath the busy eyelids.

"Why do you laugh?" asked her companion.

"Why, Harvey, to hear from your lips, the lips of the gayest of *viveurs*, the freshest of men of the town, that you are actually a little tired of your existence." And Mrs. Frothingley laughed again. "And of me?" she added, with an inimitable

glance of mingled raillery and appeal. And she laid a beautiful, bejewelled hand on the doctor's big brown palm while she looked into his face.

"Of course," said her companion, with calm amusement. "Didn't we tire each other to death long since?"

A light shade of vexation passed over the handsome face of the woman at his side, but it passed unnoticed, for the doctor was gazing with careless nonchalance into the blue smoke rising from his cigar.

"You were always vexatious and original, Harvey," said Eva Frothingley, gazing at him, but withdrawing her hand swiftly, as if it had been struck. "I suppose it was because you were so different to the herd that I took any pains about you. You were always magnificently rude."

"I'm a great brute, Eva," he said half apologetically; "but you take everything I say too seriously. Of course I am your faithful and devoted servant, &c., for ever. But you remember when we met at Nice—let me see, how many seasons ago?"—he asked this with a little malicious amusement—"we did positively agree that we had known each other long enough."

"Yes, after you had lost your last napoleon to the *croupier* at Monte Carlo, and were rude to me because I wished to pay your hotel bill and lend you some money."

"No wonder," replied Harvey Carroll curtly. "I don't borrow money—from women. It is the one modern accomplishment that I have not yet mastered," he added, with a curl of his lip.

"Tut, tut," replied Mrs. Frothingley. "You are very old-world in some of your notions. The modern young gentleman would label you 'Fossil of an Ancient Pattern of Respectability,' in a decayed state of preservation."

The doctor laughed slightly and answered, "Not so. I have been anything but a pattern of respectability. Indeed I was serious just now when I said that I was a little tired of my life. It has been such a purposeless, aimless life. So barren and bare of all good things. And the cup

of the world's pleasure is soon drained, and a second quaffing nauseates. Yes, I am tired of pleasure. Pleasure! Faugh!" And with a gesture of ineffable disgust he roused himself and drank off the coffee that stood at his side.

"You are in one of your melancholy moods this evening, Harvey," said Mrs. Frothingley, after regarding him for a moment in silence. "Have you been losing at that horrid club lately?"

"I always lose," he said good humouredly.

"It's a pity you play so much," she said.

"It's a pity I do anything that I shouldn't," he replied carelessly. "Ugh!" he went on, "I'm done for—past redeeming. Gambling has been the curse of my race. It killed my grandfather, it nearly ruined my father—he lost three parts of a great fortune at the card table, and by a superhuman effort of will he stopped at that, and will never again touch a card—but as for me," he paused abruptly and shook his head, "I'm only anxious about the boy keeping straight for the sake of the old man. Frank is his favourite, and it would break his heart if the youngster turned out badly—like—like me, you know," he said with a frank wave of his hand.

"Not that the dad and I are anything but the best of friends," he went on. "He shakes his head when we go down at Christmas and says, 'Harvey, my boy, you're on the old road, the road that your father and your father's father went. Pull up in time, my boy; dash it, I know you'll pull up in time. You are a gentleman, Harvey, and will never disgrace me by some dirty act that I should tremble to hear. But look after the boy; don't let him touch a card, or never come into my presence again.' And the old man trembles all over, and gives me a cheque for a couple of hundred, and I come back to town and—throw it away. Great heavens, though," said the doctor with some emotion, "I have kept my word about the boy. He has never touched a card. Never!"

He had spoken with some passion, this reckless man of the world, as the thought of his fine old father away alone in the curtailed remnants of the old Devonshire home sped across his mind, and of the trust which the old man, with a superb discrimination anent the weaknesses of his reckless first-born, had placed in his hands. He might not save himself, but he could save his brother. His handsome bearded face had sunk upon his open hands and his sight was hidden, or he might have seen the dangerous gleam that flashed for an instant from the lurid eyes of the woman at his side, and marvelled much upon it.

Suddenly he looked up. "Eva," he said, swiftly, almost pleadingly, "you have some influence with Frank. He listens to what you say. You must help me with him, Eva. I am afraid at times that he will not listen to me. It is in the blood and—he has my life before him."

"How terribly anxious you are about this poor innocent," she said at length, with a satirical smile.

The doctor sprang up from his easy chair to the full height of his tall form. "I am, in truth," he said earnestly, and then he leaned upon the table and looked through and through his companion.

"Will you help me, Eva," he said, "or are you grown so full of the world's hardness that you think an old man's peace of mind and a boy's in-

nocence two idle things to be sneered at and destroyed?"

"Bless me! no, Harvey," replied Mrs. Frothingley composedly. "Innocence and peace of mind! No more charming things in the world. Quite idyllic, I'm sure. But I'm afraid you overrate my influence with Frank. I never succeeded in influencing any one. I could never influence you."

"Well, at any rate, you can keep him out of the clutches of some of your intimates," said the doctor moodily.

"Don't be so ill-bred, Harvey," returned Mrs. Frothingley with serene grace, "One would think I harboured a den of thieves, instead of knowing only people of the most immaculate description."

Harvey Carroll laughed grimly. "You were always charmingly careful," he said ironically. "I suppose you reckon Count Villeneuve, the Hon. Jack Juggleby, and Mrs. Montessor amongst the immaculates?"

"I shall be angry soon, *mon docteur*," said the hitherto unruffled Eva. "Nobody will be safe in my poor house soon with your dreadful insinuations falling about. Are you so blameless that you can sit in judgment on your neighbours?"

"I don't cheat at cards, and I don't run away with other men's wives, at any rate," he replied savagely.

"No, you were always so charmingly careful," she said, returning him his irony with interest. "You are getting quite dull, Harvey, not original. There are so many things that you don't do, that I am growing quite afraid of you. You will be taking me to task next!"

She gave him a little tap with her fan and an arch look which her long experience succeeded in rendering tolerably effective, but the doctor was immovable to-night.

"I think we had better rejoin these—these disreputable people," said Mrs. Frothingley cheerfully, "or they will be saying that you have been making love to me, or some other ill-natured remark!"

"Love!" laughed the doctor. "I should think we had forgotten how to make love!"

"A woman never forgets," replied Eva in a low tone, rendered suddenly serious. She looked at her companion, but there was no answering sentiment on his face, only a faint tired smile. They were sitting in a large alcove cut off from the drawing-room by heavy curtains, the single window in which looked out upon the verdant lawn of Mrs. Frothingley's picturesque villa on the banks of the Thames, and there at the end of the lawn flowed the silent river, calm and graceful enough here, but soon to be mingled with the oozing mud beyond, and the savage restlessness of its step-parent the ocean. It was a favourite nook with Mrs. Frothingley and her favoured guest, and they had lingered here since dinner, for the purposes of digestion possibly, or mayhap to dream a little, so far as such worldlings might dream without exhaustion, of bygone times, when their hearts had been younger and more susceptible. But the only result of their dreaming was the conversation we have just recorded, unless we count those occasional flashes of Eva Frothingley's dangerous eyes, which seemed to follow any fresh evidence of her companion's real or assumed indifference, and to display some traces of the working of her passionate mind. Evidently

a woman not to be despised or lightly turned aside from a fixed purpose.

They had been passionate lovers once, these matured beings, in the old boy-and-girl days. The man had nearly broken his heart (if indeed one's heart can break) when worldliness triumphed, and the girl was married to a grizzly stockbroker named Frothingley, a man who had contrived to acquire a considerable quantity of other people's money in a masterly immoral manner, and was looking about for some means of spending it.

So he bought Eva Frothingley with it, and seemed tolerably well content with his bargain, although Society said what a truly unscrupulous woman she was; but when he had the misfortune to die, some three or four years afterwards, and his wife buried him in the handsomest manner, Society said what a truly estimable woman she was when it had discovered that the dear Eva was the dead stockbroker's sole legatee, and only five-and-twenty years of age.

And Harvey Carroll, to soften the wound in his heart, applied himself to physic and gambling with tolerable impartiality. He earned his money with his physic and spent it with his gambling, and some sharper or another benefited by the transaction.

They had met again at Nice, the tired man of the world, with all the boy crushed out of him, and the handsome widow, free, unfettered, and rich. They had resumed intimacy, but to the disillusionized man it was no more. He could laugh now at the old hurt, but he could not re-open it. But the woman—well life was still young to her, and a woman never forgets the first man she loves.

At length Eva Frothingley rose with a half sigh, and passed with her companion into a brilliantly lighted and tastefully furnished drawing-room, where were assembled the guests of the evening, some eight or nine intimates, who were amusing themselves sufficiently to overlook their hostess's absence.

Mrs. Frothingley's guests were hardly of the first order; a rubber of whist with heavy betting on the points was going on in one corner, and one Captain Caverton, a hook-nosed man with hawk eyes and too much jewellery, who called himself a promoter, was concocting with Count Villeneuve, a gentleman who might have been justifiably mistaken for a brigand in his native country, the outlines of a promising swindle that had just occurred to his fertile brain, and which he felt called upon to assert would be a "big go."

A little distance from this excellent pair, and seated in solitary state on an ottoman, was a lady of ample dimensions and considerable fortune, who wrote gorgeous romances for the kitchen journals, and thought herself immortal. She was engaged in a deep reverie, which possibly involved the contemplation of her own cleverness, and was paying no heed to those around, although in the privacy of her boudoir she was wont to confide to her bosom friends that she only attended Mrs. Frothingley's receptions in search of "subjects." The poor lady called it "seeing life!"

There was a bright young genius of a painter in another corner, talking art nonsense, and believing all that he said, too, at the time, to a grave dark-eyed girl, who was listening demurely to his chatter.

Mrs. Frothingley patronized art, if it happened

to be cheap, so she bestowed an occasional invitation upon the young artist. The poor lad, for lack of something better to do, had painted her an excellent portrait for the wages of a bricklayer's labourer, and he was wise enough, or hungry enough, to take out the balance in dinners when the opportunity offered.

The doctor crossed over to the artist and his companion as they entered the room, and Mrs. Frothingley joined the Immortal, and was speedily immersed in the discussion of a new costume, the only subject besides the Beautiful in which feminine immortality could condescend to be interested. The painter presently wandered to the card table, and the doctor took a chair beside the young girl.

"You look tired, Grace. Has Hatherleigh been boring you to death with art?" he asked with a smile.

"Oh no. He is very enthusiastic," replied Grace, lifting her grave eyes to her companion. "I have a headache. Mrs. Frothingley was angry with me this afternoon."

Grace Cunningham was Eva Frothingley's companion and friend, and was alternately petted and bullied by that excellent lady as her caprice dictated. Grace was eighteen, an orphan without kith or kin, very beautiful in a dark Italian fashion, very amiable, and an ardent worshipper of Mrs. Frothingley.

Harvey said, "I am very sorry," with sufficient gravity, and then added, "Eva is very tiresome at times, I suppose."

"Oh no," said Grace, kindling. "I am the tiresome person. She is too good!"

"Is she indeed?" said Harvey in a dry tone.

"You don't visit us much now, Doctor Carroll," said Grace suddenly. "Have we become very tiresome?"

"I—I have been busy," he said absently.

"We have quite missed you," she went on frankly. "You know, Doctor Carroll, I don't like any of these people much, and—and——"

"You are good enough to think I am a shade preferable?" he said with a quiet smile.

"No, no. You are quite different. That is why we miss you so much."

"Have you then missed me?"

"Yes." She looked up shyly, and found that his gaze was bent upon her. Moreover, she saw something in the grave brown eyes of her companion that caused her to avert her gaze, while she felt a deep carnation swelling up and glowing through her dark face.

"I'm not worth remembering, child," he said sadly. "Perhaps—who knows—I might have been—but it's too late now. My sun has set."

In a younger man this self-condemnation might have been affectation, but with Harvey Carroll it was so woefully sincere that his companion shivered as if a cold wind had passed over her.

"Some day some good man will enter into your life, my child, and make it worth living. You are too good for this. It is well enough for us, but you are different. Do not let these people or Eva spoil your nature. Be steadfast and wait."

He said this in a low tone, his eyes bent upon the ground, while the beautiful girl looked straight before her, a faint quivering of the lips being the only indication that she heard and felt what he was saying.

"Won't you sing something, dear?" interposed

Eva Frothingley at this moment in the sweetest of tones. The invitation followed swiftly upon two or three ominous flashes of the dangerous eyes which Eva had found time to cast in the direction of the doctor and his companion.

The girl rose obediently and walked to the piano, and Mrs. Frothingley beckoned Harvey to her side. The romancist and the artist were deep in the discussion of the infinite in its relation to the practical possibilities of old china, and were getting delightfully mixed in their hypotheses, and Mrs. Frothingley found an opportunity of saying to Harvey with some acerbity:

"You appeared to be deep in a very interesting conversation with Grace?"

"Yes. What a pity you interrupted it," he answered with delightful urbanity.

"What was the point in discussion?"

"I really forget, Eva. I say so little that is worth remembering that—"

"Don't trifle with me, Harvey, I detest banter," interposed Eva, somewhat irritated. "I won't have you talking nonsense to Grace; you'll be turning the silly child's head. You may be very tired of your existence, but she is not to constitute a new excitement for you."

There was so much of the demon jealousy in Eva Frothingley's tone, the which she could not effectually hide, that Harvey only smiled and studied the pattern of the carpet, while Eva rattled on in the same strain. At length he managed to interpose with—

"Well, at any rate, I may be permitted to hear the child sing, I suppose? That won't destroy her peace of mind."

The girl was singing the great Frenchman's "*Quando a te lieta*" with great pathos. Even the whist players stopped their hands and listened, while their thoughts wandered for a few brief moments from the absorbing question of an odd trick to the trembling agony of the song and the passion of the singer.

A little while and it was finished, and they breathed anew, but a small atom of something diviner than erstwhile dwelt therein had found its way to the hearts of the worldlings who had heard the master's song. So great is music, the divine.

"How grandly Grace looked and sang!" mused Harvey an hour later, as his cab bore him along the Fulham Road to his rooms. "I might have been worth something to this world if"—and his mind wandered off to the illimitable, hopeless region of the "what might have been," that dreadful bourne of erring humanity.

"I must keep away from the house," he said at length as he lit a cigar. "My peace of mind is not much, but hers is priceless to me. How strange it is! It would seem that one can never grow too old in heart to love. For I do love her. I dare not see her often, or I might forget what I am." "Poor Eva, too!" he went on in a lighter tone, "she played the jealous lover very excellently. I suppose it pleases her, makes her feel young again. Poor, dear Eva! I do believe we were fond of each other once. I do indeed. What a long time ago it was, though! What a dreadfully long time ago!"

"What horrid luck!"

But the banker at the head of the long table did not seem to think so, for he swept in the stakes to a rapidly increasing pile at his right hand with an intense smile of satisfaction.

"My turn to-night, Vivian," he said with a laugh to the first speaker, a "punter" of the most reckless order.

They were playing baccarat this particular evening in the card-room at the Junior Plungers, a club of pronounced notoriety in the matter of its high play and shady reputation, which nevertheless, by judicious management, had succeeded hitherto in its praiseworthy efforts to keep its head above water, and to avoid unpleasant, palpable scandals. In this manner the Junior Plungers had contrived to keep outside of the enlarging purview of an intelligent police, which had at length given serious indications of losing sight of its hitherto fine-drawn distinction between chuck ha'penny on the pavement and chuck sovereign in the club-room, and of assimilating both amusements as vehicles for obtaining convictions in a surprisingly impartial manner.

A very comfortable, though somewhat garish apartment, this card-room at the Junior Plungers, heavily carpeted and furnished with massive fauteuils ranged around for the idlers, and elegant card-tables scattered here and there for the more business-like portion of the assembly. The long baccarat table stood in the centre of the apartment, and altogether this brilliant card-room possessed the air of being a very convenient place wherein to be rid of a cumbersome fortune (if you happened to be burdened with one) in the shortest space of time imaginable. You could back a horse, a card, a dog, or a man here with the utmost ease, the Plungers being perfectly impartial and indifferent in the matter of their speculations; you could even win or lose a thousand or more on the contingency of a fly alighting on the nose of the man sitting next to you within a given space of time, and it would be difficult to imagine what more the most ardent speculator in chance could desire.

There was a very inviting staircase just outside the card-room door too, where, after you had accomplished the feat of getting rid of your troublesome money to the extreme satisfaction of everyone but its late owner, you could conveniently pitch yourself over the balustrade and break your neck with perfect ease and certainty if you felt so disposed.

Some poor unfortunate boy actually attempted this tragic termination to his luckless career one eventful night at the Plungers, but John, the card-room waiter, was too sharp for him, caught him round the waist, lent him a sovereign, and sent him home in a cab. He might terminate his existence there if he liked, but really they couldn't have a man committing suicide on the premises, you see; it was such atrociously bad form, and stupid outsiders might have said something unpleasant.

The card-room was tolerably full this evening, there were numerous idlers lounging about on the fauteuils discounting the chances of the approach-

ing Cesarewitch and other "big events." That profoundly intelligent work of science, "Faro," was progressing in one corner, but the majority were assembled in two long rows at the middle table assisting at the equally enlightened amusement of baccarat. The Junior Plungers were a tolerably mixed assemblage; as you glanced around the room your eye would alight upon various well known bookmakers, diamond dealers, lawyers, speculators, fur merchants, and other samples of respectability, with a leaven of rascality abounding, which latter, as some excellent connoisseurs will tell you, is only respectability unmasked.

The Hebrew element was powerful, for the proprietor, with that broad and liberal spirit which distinguished his treatment of his own interests, welcomed the Jews with effusion. They were rich and powerful; they spent their money liberally on themselves, and they were the greatest gamblers on the face of the earth. So, at least, said the astute proprietor of the Plungers, and being unblest with that keen doctrinal discrimination that can distinguish between the Jewish half-crown and the Christian half-crown, he pocketed both with impartial generosity.

Singularly enough, despite its evil reputation and its high play, the Plungers was not a particularly fashionable resort. Now and again in this collection you might chance upon the face of a gentleman, but the gentlemanly element at the Plungers was for the most part of an abstract description, and consisted chiefly of unfledged youngsters in the first throes of budding manhood and ignorance, and broken down old aristocrats, who devoted their wasted energies to the arduous task of borrowing half-sovereigns and cultivating the art of forgetfulness.

Looking round the room, you catch sight of Steenie Benton, the great stockbroker; he is staking a level hundred about the Cesarewitch with that portly fellow on the left; that is Moss Levy, the diamond merchant, and the brilliant that you see flashing on his dirty little finger is a trifle in the shape of a seven carat stone that six hundred guineas would not purchase. The little man next to him, with the small twinkling eyes and the long nose, is Sol Moses, the money-lender, an imp of darkness who could put his hand on a quarter of a million of money before twelve o'clock to-morrow morning, and lend it to you at cent. per cent. with that irresistible cheerfulness of his; and that worn-out shadow on the opposite side of the table is Wriggle, the lawyer, an individual who made his way by squeezing himself into actions-at-law in much the same way as a sharp angular corkscrew introduces itself into a pliant cork.

Then there is Sir Justin Max, Bart., that reprobate with the light hair and engaging smile, who hasn't an honest pound or a principle in the world, but who is at all times ready to hire himself and his honoured old name out to promoters of youthful companies at an extremely reasonable rate; but Sir Justin's name has been falling into bad odour of late as that of a director of two or three unpropitious pit-falls, so that it is extremely probable, his reputation having thereby suffered in the floating market, that the charming young baronet will have to reduce his terms still further before he obtains another engagement. That equally charming friend of his is the great Captain McStrider. What particular qualifica-

tion secured for the gallant captain his heroic adjective I am at a loss to inform the reader. Perhaps it was that improved system for obtaining credit which he invented, and upon which he lives in tolerable comfort in a lofty but modest Pimlico apartment.

The baccarat players are standing on either side of the long table in two fierce, gesticulating noisy rows; behind them or lounging on the fauteuils are the spectators and idlers who now and again throw down a chance stake as their fancy or their belief in luck bids them. Great Heavens! what a noise! What a blaze of burning, gloating eyes! what a hellful of greedy fiends! what a glitter of gold and a rustle of crisp bank notes, staking their ownership on the turning of a card. Le Grand, le Petit, the twin-Gods! Oh, this is a brave game, this baccarat, quite pagan in its simplicity. For the Demon of Play ran fast and loose in those woful nights at the Plungers, and thousands were won and thousands were lost, and hearts were broken and lives were ruined in the space of a single round of the clock, while the wine ran like water and the blood ran like fire, in that fatal room.

"You are not playing this evening, doctor," said Fred Flitter, a horsey-looking young gentleman—whose six months' experience of the turf had revealed to him an infallible system of backing horses which presented the certain acquisition of a stupendous fortune—"how's that?"

"More sense than money this evening, I suppose, Fred," replied Harvey Carroll, who was the person addressed.

"Lend you some if you like, you know, old man; what is it? a pony, fifty, or what?" said Mr. Flitter, with the easy generosity of a youth having a gigantic fortune looming in the distance.

"No, thanks, Fred. I don't want to play to-night," said Harvey, returning the proffered notes. "And perhaps you'll want them next Monday at settling," he said with a gay laugh.

"Not likely," replied Mr. Flitter with easy confidence. "I've got a dead cert. for the Cesarewitch. I'll tell you what it is, doctor," added Mr. Flitter, dropping his voice to a mysterious whisper, "I'm in 'the know,' and when you're in 'the know,' you know, why—well—there you are, you know!"

"I suppose so," replied Harvey, not feeling particularly enlightened by Mr. Flitter's intelligent explanation of being in 'the know.'

"That's so," continued Mr. Flitter in the same mysterious whisper that appeared to involve the fate of millions. "Now I'll give you the straight tip. I had it from head-quarters, direct. Here's the telegram. *Put your shirt on Flying Dove for the Cesarewitch. It's a public house to a pint pot on the Dove.*"

"And I've piled it on," continued Mr. Flitter. "I took twenties and fives."

"In what?" inquired Harvey with happily assumed ignorance, "public-houses or shirts?"

"Go on, don't chaff," said Mr. Flitter. "That's only race slang. I took it in centuries. Shall I put a bit on for you, doctor? A fiver? They tell me it's a real cop—sure to win."

"No thanks, Fred," said his companion, a slight shade passing over his handsome tired face. "I don't bet, I gamble. The one vice is enough, Heaven knows."

"Well, you ought to have a bit on for once. I've taken it in hundreds, and I don't waste my money," said good-natured Fred, with that tone suggestive of a lifetime of uninterrupted successes which is so popular amongst turf fledglings. "Taken it in hundreds, doctor," he repeated, as he moved away to communicate his confidential "tip" in the mysterious whisper it demanded to every man who cared to listen to it.

"Poor Flitter!" mused Harvey. "He is not a bad lad. Taking it in hundreds, eh? He'll be taking it in sixpences soon, or I'm vastly mistaken. Well! well! Is it for me to blame him? Hardly. He is a boy, I am—a fool."

Then he called for some brandy and drank it off at a draught.

His eyes wandered continually to the punters and the baccarat table; with the instinct of the gambler full upon him his eyes glistened, and there was now and again a nervous passing of his hand to his pocket as if he longed to throw down a stake and feel the brief glow of curiosity which the world calls excitement. It was a terrible passion, this gambling passion of his, it seemed at times to gain brief mastery over his whole being. Most men gamble for the vulgar purpose of making money, but there are a few who play because it yields to them the intensest form of excitement that can be produced; the result of gain or loss is a small matter compared to the fierce momentary thrill of winning or losing. These men are your most desperate gamblers, they are the men who are well nigh hopeless. And Harvey Carroll felt himself to be one of these lost ones. Often had this singular man absented himself for days from the club and the card-table, making a violent effort to free himself from the chains that bound him, a stern resolution in his mind to eschew this dreadful soiling passion, and yet a few brief days would find him irresistibly drawn as by some hidden force back to the green cloth, back to those pasteboard images, back to destruction and despair. No wonder that Harvey Carroll, a man with a fine generous mind and marvellous ability, with the proud diploma of a Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, the proudest diploma that the whole world can offer, a man with a hospital appointment, and a consulting practice which his abilities had thrust upon him in spite of his weak self—no wonder that this man felt himself doomed when he found the savage hold this detestable passion had gotten upon him, and resigned himself with fierce recklessness to fate.

Once the girl at the villa on the Thames had laid her soft hand on his arm and said, "Don't play, doctor—for my sake," and strange to say this simple appeal had had more weight with him than all the promptings of his own judgment.

At times, in the quick excitement of the game, a fleeting vision of Grace had passed before his mind like a sudden ray of light and left a pain, intense and morbid behind. He had even known himself to start up at these times, seek his hat and rush into the night air, oppressed and pained. The worldlings he left behind would laugh, shrug their shoulders, and say, "Queer fellow, the doctor. A bit 'dotty' I think," and go on with the game. Not much excited by eccentricity, these card plungers, except by any that showed itself in their deals.

Harvey had a sovereign between his thumb and forefinger; he had at length drawn one from his pocket, he must just plunge that on a card and turn home, the sight of the table being to much for him, when he was informed that a friend awaited him below.

Nevertheless he must pause an instant to throw his stake on one side of the table; a deal round and the banker displayed *Le Grand*—the winning card—and swept in the stakes, while Harvey, with a careless laugh, passed downstairs.

In the reading-room he found his visitor awaiting him. It was his brother Frank, a shy, slight lad of two or three-and-twenty, with light curly hair, pretty blue eyes, and a weak nervous-looking mouth and chin. The image of his mother, those who had known her said, and this doubtless was the reason why he was held so dear by the lonely old father away in Devonshire.

"Well, laddie, how are you?" said Harvey, clapping him cheerily on the back.

"Oh, I'm all right, old boy," returned his brother. "I went round to your rooms, and finding you out thought perhaps that you would be here."

"Come and have some supper," said the doctor. "No? A little brandy, whisky—what shall it be? You look pale and tired, Frank; what is it, reading or revelling?" and he laughed a little.

The boy certainly looked pale and anxious, with two dark rims under his eyes, such as study or hard anxiety will produce.

They passed into the smoking-room, and Frank swallowed his brandy eagerly while the doctor scanned him narrowly.

"How are you getting on at hospital, Frank?" he said presently. "I don't see much of you now. Do you think you'll get through your primary all right?"

"I suppose so," replied the student. "I'm—I'm reading a good deal you know, Harvey."

"I hope so, laddie," replied Harvey, "but you mustn't knock yourself up. 'All work and no play'—you know the old saw. You are looking quite ill."

There was a slight pause, during which the younger brother bit his nails and fidgeted nervously as if he had something unpleasant to communicate.

Presently he said hurriedly, "I say, Harvey, old man, you won't mind, will you? I'm dreadfully hard up for coin, and wanted you to lend me some more."

The doctor grew a little grave. "You're getting through a deuced lot of money, Frank, lately. You had your allowance from the governor on the first, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I had to pay it all away at my diggings and other things, you know, Harvey. It costs an awful lot to live," said the boy.

"Then you had five-and-twenty pounds from me a few days ago, when I last saw you. Is that all gone?"

"That was for that tailor fellow, you know, Harvey. I must have clothes, mustn't I?" he said, with a slight forced laugh.

"I suppose you must," replied his brother. "Well, what is it you want now?"

"It's that new boat of mine—you know the one, haven't you seen it? They're dunning me for the money, and—and—I do hate these worries,

old man, and I want to pay it and get rid of it."

"Humph! How much is it?"

"Well, it's nearly fifty pounds, Harvey," said the student in a low anxious tone, as if fearful of his own words.

The doctor gave a long whistle. Then he turned and looked at his brother for a moment, and said:

"Well, I don't know much about boats, but fifty pounds sounds like a devilish long price for the best boat ever built, my son!"

The young man's eyes dropped beneath his brother's gaze for an instant, and then he said, "Oh no, Harvey; it's a bit extravagant, but this is so beautifully fitted and such a tier. Do help me, Harvey."

The doctor was silent for a while, puffing at his cigar.

"Do you know, Frank," he said at length, "I've only been favoured with a sight of you lately whenever you wanted something. It doesn't look well, you know. I don't mind the money; but I can't keep myself, so I don't quite see how I am to keep you too, particularly at this rate."

"I won't ask you again, Harvey, indeed I won't," said the student earnestly. "But I must have this to-night."

"Why to-night?" asked Harvey quickly.

"Oh, so that I can send it off in the morning," he replied readily enough.

The doctor looked into the blue eyes. "Frank," he said, "you're not deceiving me? You're keeping your word about cards and all that? You are Frank, eh?"

"Of course I am," replied the lad testily. "What a queer old fidget you are! You know I detest cards; think them so horribly slow."

"Well, I've only got five pounds about me," said Harvey when he had examined his pockets. "Stay here a minute. I will see if I can get the money."

A bright gleam flashed across the pallid nervous face of the student as he watched his brother saunter off, the brother whom he had ever been wont to lean upon, and who had given him a full measure of protection, the brother to whom he could in return lie with such a glib tongue. For he had lied.

Harvey ascended to the card-room and ran against his friend, Mr. Flitter, at the entrance. That young gentleman, having talked himself and his listeners to death concerning the chances of "The Dove" for the great handicap, was proceeding to the billiard-room to refresh his tired spirits with a hundred up, billiards being the only occupation besides racing which in Mr. Flitter's opinion rendered life worth living.

"I'll have that fifty, Fred, for a few hours if you have it about you," said Harvey.

"Right you are, doctor, help yourself," and Mr. Flitter produced a handful of crumpled notes from his breeches pocket.

Harvey counted out fifty pounds, thanked his companion, and turned downstairs, while Mr. Flitter proceeded to the billiard-room with an increased air of self-satisfaction which seemed to say that it was only "fellers on the turf, you know, who were right down in 'the know,' who could afford to fork out a fifty on 'the nod,' as it were, you know."

Ten minutes later Frank Carroll was hurrying

down the street to a neighbouring restaurant where there awaited him an under-sized individual with very light trousers, very shiny hat, and an astounding thing in watchchains. This young gentleman was no other than the Hon. Jack Juggleby, a member of Mrs. Frothingley's circle, and as unmitigated a specimen of the sporting cad as ever trod a London street.

"Well, have you got the 'rhino?'" said the Hon. Jack.

"Yes, Jack, but he had to borrow it. It seems a shame," said Frank dubiously.

"Shame be blowed," said Mr. Juggleby. "What are brothers made for? Now we can go in and win!"

(To be continued.)

THE THREE PLANETS.

BY COULSON KERNAHAN.

MUSING on Knowledge, and Art, and Song,
Spent I a summer's day,
Musing and dreaming the whole day long,
Musing till twilight grey.

Raising a temple within my mind,
Where, on an altar high,
Knowledge, and Art, and Song, enshrined,
Sought I to deify.

"God—if there be One at all," I said,
"Seems like a distant star;
These, as the sun in the sky o'erhead,
Glad realities are."

Falling asleep in that musing mood,
Dreamt I a dream that night,
Dreamt that alone on a moor I stood,
Never a gleam of light.

Vainly I looked for a star-beam stray,
Searching from pole to pole,
Nothing but darkness around me lay,
Black as a demon's soul.

Searching again in the gloomy skies,
Seeking for sign of day,
Saw I three planets far-off arise,
Chasing the night away.

Three mighty planets in splendour rolled,
Mounting the inky sky,
Gleaming in ruby, silver, and gold—
"These be my suns!" said I.

Answered a Voice in my inmost breast,
"These have no light their own,
'Tis but the sun in the far-off west,
Gilds them with fire alone.

"These but the mirrors the dazzling sun
Floods with a burning ray,
They are but sent till the night is done,
He is the Source of day.

"Knowledge, and Art, and Song," it said,
"If thou would'st read aright,
Then must thou look to their Fountain-Head,
Not to their borrowed light!"

Thus the Voice ended: my dreamings fled—
In the drear dawning, grey,
Bitterly weeping, beside my bed,
Humbly I knelt to pray.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER XI.

SEPARATED.

AGNES did get over it certainly, in the way her sisters had expected. She recovered her cheerfulness and a certain measure of health, and she was permitted by those around her to be occasionally fretful, and even unreasonable, in consideration of the trying circumstances in which she was placed.

She was made more of a pet than ever, as one who had an afflicting story belonging to her, and who might be considered somewhat of a heroine on the strength of it. But the atmosphere in which she lived was not bracing; the encouragement which she received in her self-pity and self-indulgence gave little hope of a return to robust life. It was not wonderful, then, that she never completely recovered her health, nor even that very moderate degree of mental vigour which had once been hers. She had always intended to be happy, and to behave well, according to her limited ideas; and this intention had given some spring and elasticity to her thoughts, even when she was most submissive to Susie. It had contributed also not a little—as youthful hopefulness does—to her activity of limb and alertness of interest in events outside her own life.

Now, she knew distinctly that she was not happy; she had possessed something which she would miss daily and always, and she was not willing to pay the needful price for its recovery. Also she knew perfectly, amid those deeper and unspoken regrets over which a veil of trivial troubles was discreetly drawn, that she was not behaving well to the man to whom she owed so much, and who had never, even for a moment, acted towards her with selfishness.

As she could not alter her conduct satisfactorily without suffering, and as she did not want to suffer, her foundation for belief in herself and hope in the future was gone. It was easiest to look on herself as an invalid, to regard the circumstances of life as too strong for her, and, since she could not be happy, to be at least as comfortable as she could.

Therefore, she accepted the mitigations offered to her by fate, and was content to be ailing and somewhat dull. Too much energy or intelligence might have spurred her to an effort which she dreaded to make, and she was encouraged by her sisters to avoid those dangerous qualities. Everything would be forgiven her except a spirit of enterprise. Whatever she did badly or failed to do was attributed to her ill-health. If she was idle, it was supposed that she did not feel well enough to work; if she was fretful or petulant, it was supposed that she was thinking over her sad experiences. Every duty was taken from her, and she was encouraged to rest or amuse herself as she felt disposed. She was caressed, consoled, and indulged in everything except the one secret wish of her heart, and that wish she perhaps

never acknowledged to herself after the first anguish of separation was over.

Her old friends welcomed her back among them. They said that she was sweeter than ever—more interesting; but they made little capital out of her adventures. She could not bear to talk of them; she shuddered when they were referred to; but she brightened into animation when her husband was mentioned. Yet even on this subject her readiness to give information was small; Mr. Dilworth was wonderfully good and clever, and that was all she could find to say.

If any one remarked politely that she must miss him very much, she acquiesced; but would add with a sigh, "Susie says that even if I were strong enough to join him in Australia, I should only interfere with his work there."

So she fell back into the old life, with its old pleasures, and old monotony; she looked forward to letters from her husband; with that exception it began to be as if she had never married at all.

But this period, when forgetfulness and a return to her girlish days seemed possible, was not to last long. She had taken a step which must change her whole life, and, however much she might avoid its consequences and shirk its responsibilities, the new days would not fit on to the old as if there had been no gap between.

A new life began at the Stepping Stones in the spring of the year, a little life innocent of wrong, and ignorant of all the perplexity about it; and the day came when Agnes Dilworth, holding her baby in her arms, looked at her sisters and wondered if they would not say that *now* she ought to join her husband.

They said nothing of the sort. They assured her, on the contrary, that it was her duty to remain in England for the sake of her little daughter.

The child had been named Henrietta Kate, after the husband Agnes loved, and the sister she had lost. Miss Leake would have objected to the first name, as awkwardly long and vulgarly fine, but she was afraid to object to anything at the moment, lest her own influence should slip away before the new power of maternity.

Under the changed condition of things, Henry Dilworth could be even less ignored and forgotten than before; it was natural, unavoidable even, that his wife should think of him and talk of him a great deal. Yet it seemed to Miss Leake more important than ever that Agnes should be prevented from sacrificing her life to his, because the whole future of this little niece (whom Miss Leake received at once into her affectionate care, though she was not fond of babies) depended on the associations of her infancy and the education of her youth.

She tried to impress this fact on Agnes. She even persuaded her that Henry Dilworth himself would wish his daughter to lose none of the advantages secured by a residence in Elmdale.

"Many mothers bring their children home to be educated, and here you are comfortably settled already," she observed, "and everything as it should be. It must be a great satisfaction to Mr. Dilworth to know that you and the baby are so well cared for while he is obliged to be absent on these explorations."

Every occupation in Australia, even sheep-farming, was an "exploration" to Miss Leake at this period.

Poor Agnes had been inclined to think, in the new yearning of her heart over this little child, that her baby's interests turned the scale of duty the other way, and that no daughter could be better for missing a father's love. Also she had fancied—foolishly, of course, since Susie thought otherwise—that Henry Dilworth had a right to this child, besides having a stronger right than ever to the child's mother.

She knew that he liked all children—how tender he had been to that poor stupid boy on the island!—she knew how he had loved *her*; and sometimes faintly it dawned upon her what a sad disappointment his marriage must have been to him; he had been made use of to the utmost, at a time of need, and sent away with scanty thanks when the need was over. A faint desire to "behave better" to him was in her mind, a dim fancy that perhaps this child was sent to her husband as a compensation for her own weakness and a recompense for his love.

But she shrank from effort and inconvenience; she disliked deciding for herself, and preferred that others should tell her what to do. She could not endure a struggle against the will of those around her, unless forced to it by unpleasant sensations or the fear of them. So she let the time drift by without seizing this opportunity to reassert her freedom of will, without making any advance to her husband or appeal to him.

He waited for it, and hoped for it. The thought of a home, with Agnes as its mistress and a little child as its delight, was very pleasant to him; but he made no claim in spite of this. If Agnes was not willing to come to him, and had no desire to send for him; if she was not content to live with him in any way possible to his nature, he was determined to force her to no effort of self-denial. His was the strength, and with him should rest the disappointment of this marriage, if disappointment there must be. He had entered into it for her sake, and for her sake he would relinquish every right it gave. At least his work was left to him, and in that he found solace and hope.

But it could not be as if he had never married her, or as if he had no wife and no child living far away; his thoughts went to them often across the deserts and the lonely sea; and the dull continual aching of yearnings unsatisfied brought an unspoken sadness into his life.

Gradually he came to understand that Miss Leake was—consciously or unconsciously—scheming to protect his wife and child from the injury which his presence would do to them. He comprehended that she regarded his absence as essential to their welfare and happiness, and that, through all her forms of polite regret at his separation from his family, she was perpetually appealing to him not to return.

No word from Agnes contradicted this appeal, or he would have altogether ignored it. His wife had ceased to write of any near reunion as probable; she seemed to have settled back into old habits, and to have no thought of change. Therefore he let the time go by; and, though sad enough at heart to think that the only service he could do to these he loved best was to keep far from their sight, he made no outward complaint or protest. Miss Leake always said that he was absorbed in his pursuits, and that it would be wrong to interfere with him. Agnes seemed to believe her.

So that, after all, Agnes gained little freedom by her motherhood. She had not the strength of will to make the most of any position in which she was not properly supported; and her delicate health always gave her sisters a plea for interfering with any plans that were too vigorous. It also permitted them to ignore apparent discontent, or to attribute it to physical causes. If Agnes seemed restless, they said she wanted a change; if she was low-spirited, they said she was fatigued, and must keep very quiet; if they found her in tears, they soothed her, and brought her a cup of tea. On every occasion they persuaded her that her melancholy arose from physical causes, and not from an unsatisfied heart.

Even the child came to be regarded as little more than a plaything so far as she was concerned. When she was well enough she was permitted to amuse herself with it, but it was instantly taken from her as soon as she appeared tired. She was not supposed to be strong enough to take the management of the infant, and Miss Leake was the actual authority who arranged the baby's affairs, as she arranged everything else within her reach.

She had so great a dread of Henry Dilworth's interference with his child's education, so great a fear of his return before that education was finished, that, contrary to her own general principles, she began a system of teaching ridiculously early, and engaged a French nurse to take care of Kate when the child was only three years of age.

Consequently, at five years old, Henry Dilworth's daughter spoke a smattering of a tongue wholly unknown to her father, was full of the caprices of a spoilt little lady—convinced of her own importance and of the vulgarity of the general world—and was altogether as different a creature as well could be from what her father would have made her. She had been encouraged in the cultivation of an exclusiveness which she did not understand; for Miss Leake's exaggerated dread of any development of vulgar tastes in the child had led her to check every innocent tendency to that affability which she had thought it safe to cultivate in her own more happily placed sisters.

Under these circumstances little Kate soon learned to be wilful and imperious, to regard with more or less contempt every one who was not admitted to the sanctuary of her aunt's drawing-room, and to indulge her feelings at the cost of any stranger whom she judged to be of an inferior type—one that did not come up to the all-sufficient drawing-room standard. When she was four years old a courageous plumber ventured to address a remark to her uninvited. He was mending the window of her nursery, and he thought that his superiority of age entitled him to be friendly and conversational. But the little lady soon put him in his right place. She drew herself up to her full height, clutched her doll tightly and protectingly in her arms, and replied, with more haughtiness than grammar—

"How dare you speak to such people as *us*?"

Meanwhile, with every healthful stimulus to exertion removed, with every unselfish interest taken from her, it was not wonderful that the health of Agnes gradually deteriorated. Nor was it strange that, in the invalid's life which she was encouraged to lead, the final failure of her strength should escape observation for some time after it

had begun. The unsatisfactory and anomalous position which she occupied preyed upon her spirits more and more as she left behind her the easy docility as well as the inconsequent light-heartedness of girlhood.

A mother with little authority over her child, a wife who never saw her husband and who had never presided over any household—there was something unreal and dispiriting about her life. She had grown used to it however; any change which could come now would be as much a trial as a relief; she felt that circumstances were hopelessly wrong, and that nothing could be done to better them. She said to herself that perhaps it was true, as Susie evidently thought, that her marriage had been a mistake, and that she should have made her way home alone.

Even little Katie failed to arouse her and to make her happy; the child was only a part of the general perplexity and contradiction, a responsibility which troubled without inspiring her to effort. She felt vaguely that her husband's probable wishes were not sufficiently considered in the little girl's education; she knew instinctively that Susie had no true appreciation of Henry Dilworth, and that it was not right or fair to leave the management of his daughter entirely in her hands.

But she was too listless to interfere. As her despondency increased her energies flagged more and more, and she suffered from a corresponding failure in health. This seemed to her sisters only a temporary weakness, from which she would recover as she had recovered many times before. The change was too gradual to be alarming, and excited little attention in one who had been so long regarded as an invalid.

In the sixth year of little Kate's existence there occurred a blank of many months in the Australian correspondence. Henry Dilworth had accepted the command of an important exploring expedition, which took him far out of the regions of mails. For a long period therefore his wife received no letters from him; and, in her increasing weakness, she fretted over this disappointment strangely. She was at first anxious about her husband, afterwards about herself; and she repeated many times to her sisters, "I shall never see him again, I know."

They laughed at her fears; and when news came of Henry Dilworth's safe arrival in civilized regions, they expected an immediate return to cheerfulness on the part of his wife. But she persisted in repeating, "I shall never see him again, I know."

She wrote to him in this strain, complaining with some passion of his long absence, as if, indeed, he had remained away against her wish.

"I am very ill, though they won't believe it," she wrote, "and I shall die without seeing you, I know. Why don't you come home? Why did you ever go away? or why did you marry me at all? I have not been happy, though they tell me I have. I don't think I could have borne it so long, but it was good for the little girl. I don't want her to be unhappy like me. I don't want her to know that any one can be so unhappy. I didn't—before I left home. And now I want to see you before I die. You will talk to me, and make me not afraid. The others won't hear of it. They tell me I shall get better; and I am too

tired to argue. I want some one to believe me without. You must come.

"AGNES."

This letter, with its passionate reproach, its pitiful appeal, its ungrateful forgetfulness of all her husband's silent abnegation, was a strange reopening of the closed past.

The next vessel which left Australia for England took Henry Dilworth back to his wife.

CHAPTER XII.

A WELCOME AND GOOD-BYE.

WHEN Henry Dilworth reached the Stepping Stones the low light of the afternoon sun was gleaming over the hill-tops, and sending far the shadow of the trees. The years since he had last visited the place had changed it little; the very same water seemed to be slipping over the very same stones, the tufts of fern on the banks, the groups of trees on the hillocks, were just what they used to be.

But a little child was playing in the front garden, a child with dark hair and shining dark eyes. She came into the road to watch him cross the river, and as he approached her she said, in a clear little imperious voice, "I should like to cross by the stones. Carry me over."

It had occurred to her intelligent mind that a stranger might be induced to satisfy an old ambition of hers—weeks old—to be carried over the stepping-stones. Miss Leake had forbidden her nurse to gratify this reasonable desire; but this man, whom she had never seen before, couldn't be aware of the troublesome fact, and would probably do as he was told without asking inconvenient questions.

When, however, she spoke to Henry Dilworth a flood of mingled wonder and recognition swept over his brain. Could this be his own child? the little girl he had thought of, and longed to see. She was such a child as any father might be proud of, and yet not perhaps the child of his imagination.

He took her up in his arms and looked at her silently. For a moment she made no objection, but looked back at him with composure, expecting a reply. When she thought she had waited long enough, she repeated, with some impatience and more imperiousness, "Carry me over."

"To-morrow, perhaps, little one; not now."

She became angry at once, when she found that he had taken the liberty of lifting her up without intending to carry out her wishes, and her anger took the form of dignified reserve, rather amusing in so young a child.

"Put me down; I don't like you," she said concisely.

"Is your name Katie? Katie Dilworth?" he asked her, holding her still in his arms.

But her anger grew into passion at his persistence.

"Put me down. You are a rude man. I shall tell Aunt Susie. *Allez vous en*," she said, breaking into her old nurse's language in her excitement, and struggling to free herself from his grasp.

"Give me a kiss first" he answered, with characteristic gentleness.

"No. You are ugly. You are big. You are rude. *Je ne vous aime pas. Allez vous en.*" And she struck at his face in her anger with her soft little palms.

The foreign words hurled at him by those infantile lips hurt him more than the blow she tried to give in her childish passion. Already it seemed that she was educated out of his world; she spoke to him in a language he could not understand, and recognised him as some one to whom she might be impertinent with impunity. Nevertheless there was something pleasant in the sensation of being kicked at by the little feet whose existence he had never fully realized until now.

He put her down on the ground, hoping to soothe her, and to work his way into her confidence more gradually than he had first attempted to do. But she gave him no further opportunity; as soon as she found herself at liberty she fled through the garden into the house. He followed her, entering as she had done, by the open door, and he was witness of her breathless entrance into the drawing-room.

"Aunt Susie, there is a man in the garden, a very big man, and he wanted to kiss me, and—there he is!"

Agnes had been lying on the couch with her eyes shut, but she opened them eagerly at the child's first words. Now she sprang to her feet, her eyes fixed expectantly on the door-way, and the colour coming and going in her worn cheeks.

Her husband, when he first saw her, hardly knew whether the change in her looks was one of sickness or health: her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright, her weakness was masked by her momentary excitement.

He looked at none else, but put out his hands towards her with a rare, bright smile of tender recognition.

She uttered a low cry, and went forward to meet him.

"Henry!" she said; "at last! Oh, how long it is!" And then, to the consternation of her sisters, she fainted away in his arms.

The sadness of this late reunion was more evident than its happiness. There would be no more parting between the husband and wife before the last one—because that was so near. No one would struggle again to wean Agnes from Henry Dilworth's influence, because Death had claimed her, and sisters and husband alike must yield her to him.

Agnes herself knew it, as soon as the first joyful excitement was over.

"It is too late; you cannot save me this time, dearest," she said, addressing him by a tenderer term than she had ever used before. "You have come so very far only to say good-bye."

"More than that," he said, "to look at you, to be with you, to help you if I can."

"Yes," she sighed, speaking low in her weakness, "it would have been hard to die without you, now, when I am your wife. Even on the island, you promised to be with me if I died."

"I am glad you sent for me, very glad." It was all he said; he uttered no regrets to her, and no reproach to any one else. There was no time to waste in anger or repining. He wanted to keep her with him for a little longer, to have a few days of love and reconciliation which he might re-

member when the end had come; but even this respite was not granted to him. He was not permitted to look with her upon the dawning of another day.

Late that night Katie was carried to her mother, and told to kiss her as she lay in bed propped up by pillows, breathing with difficulty. The strange man sat by the bedside, and had hardly a word or look for the child, who gazed at the whole scene with awed and wondering eyes. What was his daughter to him at this moment, when her mother and his wife lay dying in his sight?

"I am not so much afraid now—as I was—the first time," Agnes murmured to him afterwards, as he sat beside her, listening to the broken confidences which she tried to give from time to time. "Life is so sad. I didn't know. I never would believe it. But oh! how I have wanted you—dear! And you were so far away. It was no use speaking."

"You should have written. I wanted to come—always."

"It would have been no use. I shouldn't have gone with you. They wouldn't have let me. And perhaps—I didn't want. I don't know. I never could find out. And Susie was always quite sure. But I am glad you came. I want you—now. No one else would do. Susie is kind; but she is not—like you. You will not leave me any more."

"No more, dear child, no more."

"Susie is not like you," she repeated; "she believes in good things—when she wants. But you believe—always. That makes them seem real. You are so good. You never said what you didn't think true. I don't mean Susie did. I don't know what I mean. Does it matter? What I mean is that I am not afraid, not so much afraid, when you are here. I knew it would be so. That was why I wanted you to come."

Later on she revived a little, and turned again to the thought of life.

"Why am I to die? I am so young. I ought to have been happy. I meant to be. I thought when I married you—it would be right—for us both. Have you been unhappy too?" she added hastily, before he had time to answer. "Don't tell me. I don't want to know. Why have I to die? Whose fault is it? Perhaps it is mine. But I couldn't help it. I always did what seemed pleasantest; and it has been—miserable."

Then, as her weakness increased, her mind went back to the island, and she thought she was there once more.

"Are you there—Mr. Dilworth?" she murmured. "No ship will come to save me now. It is too late. I have dreamt that I was at home again, and that we were— Ah, it is true, we were married, were we not? And you went away. I never knew why. Susie said— Perhaps," she broke off with a flicker of light shining in on her troubled thoughts, "you were my ship—and I should have gone with you. But now—I must sail away—alone."

Before the morning dawned, the dreaded hour had passed; the little bark had drifted from the shores of life, and was lost to sight and speech in the dim solitudes of death.

(To be continued.)

TO MAY.

BRIGHT May! I had forgotten half thy sweets.
I did not know thou wert so passing fair,
So bountiful with flower-buds pure and rare;
Hark how the nightingale each soft night greets,
The cuckoo calleth through the changeful air,
And cowslip scent the weary wanderer meets.

Thou must not die, capricious May, nor leave
The emerald woods decked in their new-found
sheen

So pure, so delicate of hue, a queen
Could not such raiment own, for none can weave
The tremulous thin garments that are seen
On every hedge: that doth past joys retrieve.

They call thee petulant, thou winsome May!
And cold at times, now giving frost or rain,
Then pouring forth thy vagrant charms again,
Thou givest us a perfect summer day,
Then mocking take'st it back, an thou wert fain
To hide thy beauties from our gaze away.

E'en if 'tis so, I will not give thee blame!
Who else save thou call'st forth the hawthorn
bloom,
Who else hangs out the lilac's feathery plume.
Thy glance is lit by the bright-burning flame
Of glad laburnum that doth banish gloom
Amid the woods, whence thy first footsteps came.

How can I part with thee? Ah! do not go!
June brings us roses—roses white or red—
And calls late blossoms from their dreamy bed,
Yet cannot give what thou hast lavished so,
The first fresh print of springtide's lightsome tread,
The thrush's song of love, so sweet, so low.

I do forgive thee all thy frowns, thy tears,
Thy maiden form, thy youth, shall win thee this,
For none is like to love's first bashful kiss,
So none is like to thee: now hope; now fears;
Now pale with discontent; now flushed with bliss,
And waxing fairer as thy death-day nears.

J. E. PANTON.

 THE MOLE.

THAT little subterranean dweller, the mole, is by far the fiercest and most active of British animals. He works day and night, in short shifts of a few hours on and a few hours off. His labours are too arduous to be continued for any length of time without a break in which to rest and sleep. But the poor fellow never gets a holiday; winter and summer he toils away in the earth, and at the year's end has not lost a moment on account of "broken weather." When hard frosts set the pick of his human brother at defiance, the mole throws up mounds as usual. Where he has found the soft soil is rather a mystery, still there it is. There is no deception, you can see it rising, sometimes through a thickness of snow. He can throw up a hillock in a very short time, which is altogether marvellous in comparison to his size, for to equal him in this respect, a man would have to make a heap twelve feet high and

twenty feet in diameter. The earth is not only dug and piled up, but conveyed sometimes for several yards along the burrow. He is almost as agile in his own element as a fish in the water. He invariably resides in the best land, no doubt, because worms are most plentiful there. If, by accident, you should catch him on the surface, by the way in which he dives below, you might imagine he was disappearing into a previously constructed tunnel, when in reality he has had to dig a passage. With all his strength he is so easily injured that it is almost impossible to capture him in a sound condition. If he should be taken without hurt, the labour of feeding him, as a pet, is out of the question. He eats voraciously, and to keep him in worms you would require to be up early, and as diligent in hunting them as he is himself. He is also a great drinker, although of nothing stronger than water. He sinks wells to obtain a supply, and probably did so long before man resorted to the same artificial means. In fact he comes of a family of noted engineers. The profession runs in his blood, his forefathers from time immemorial having gained a livelihood by their skill in earthworks. He constructs subterranean roads that lead in every direction around his headquarters. This is a complicated stronghold, which seems more adapted for defence than defiance. Fearless fighter though he is, like a good general, he takes care to provide against the possibility of having to retreat. When a battle is lost, he retires to his stronghold, and by the facilities for strategic movements which it affords, instead of having to yield his life, he is once more in a position to hold his own. Anybody who studies the structure of this wonderful place of refuge, can see that it can be made the scene of a war-game as interesting as chess. To describe it clearly, however, without illustrations is no easy matter. In shape, it bears some resemblance to a metal stand composed of two circles, the top one much narrower than the bottom, both connected by five short bars. But, in addition to this, there is a roomy round chamber immediately below the lower circle, which does not communicate directly with it, the entrance being from the top circle by three short passages. Thus, when a mole wishes to get into the wide chamber, which seems to be the chief retiring apartment, he has first to get into the lower circle, and then to mount to the upper one before he can descend into what may be called his hall of state. He is not senseless enough to get into a place where he might be taken at any moment by surprise, without having a means of escape, say in the event of a weasel dropping in. From the centre of the chamber, therefore, a passage slips downwards, which, rising in a curve, opens into one of the larger tunnels or high inroads, that to the number of seven or eight, radiate in different directions from the stronghold. These are private ways to the owner's hunting ground. With the continual rubbing of the creature's fur against the walls of main passages, they soon become smooth and polished. A tunnel through hard ground, as under a garden walk, for instance, the mole-catcher knows to be an excellent place to set a trap, because his victims, rather than have the labour of constructing a number of them, use the one already existing. In a run of this kind a dozen moles may be taken in a few days.

When Mr. Mole enters the matrimonial state, he or Mrs. Mole—probably both, have to settle upon a family residence. The stronghold is not adapted for a nursery, and so they make a special nest for their five or six little ones. In construction it is much simpler than the stronghold, being merely a subterranean hollow with a plentiful supply of dried grass, generally situated where two or three passages meet, at a considerable distance from the defensive habitation. In case of alarm, on whatever side, the mother and young can escape in the opposite direction. To make for the stronghold, there is little doubt, would be their natural instinct. If pursued there, we can easily understand they would have a much better chance of keeping the enemy at bay. Doubling round through one of the short passages, the pursued, by attacking the pursuer in the rear, would make matters very uncomfortable for him. On finding himself in such a maze, he would be likely to turn away—amazed. The muscular power in the fore part of the mole's body is so great, that he could soon tear the hind-quarters of an unwelcome visitor to pieces. Not only does he possess marvellous strength, but he never sets about doing anything except in a frenzy. All his actions are characterized by the same fiery impetuosity. We have only to see how he eats in order to understand how he would fight. The fury and rage of a lion over a meal, in comparison to his, is a tame display, when we consider their relative size. With the lion's bulk he would be irresistible, no creature could stand before his snout or his claws, and unlike the lion, there would be scarcely any limit to the quantity he ate or to the number he slaughtered.

A mole fight is perhaps one of the best contested struggles to be found throughout the animal creation. In spring, the time of love, feuds among the males at least, are common. The way in which they settle about a mate is as creditable to their courage as it is disastrous to their bodies. They seem to be indifferent to pain; they scratch, tear, and maim each other, and after being tired of fighting underground, they will sometimes come into the open air to continue the contest. So much in earnest are they while deciding the all important question, that nothing short of interference will disturb them. When brought to their senses, they are generally too much exhausted to seek safety in flight. But at best the mole is a poor awkward subject above ground. His small, black, pin-head like eyes, covered over with hair, do not give him full powers of vision, and his very short legs and broad feet are ill fitted for a hasty retreat. Still, from experiments made by sticking straws in subterranean roads of his own making, which he was obliged to knock down in passing, it has been found that he can run with surprising swiftness.

"Here's to the little gentlemen in velvet," was a toast which produced uproarious applause among Jacobites long ago. It will be remembered that a mole raised the heap against which the horse of William III. stumbled, breaking the king's collar bone, and indirectly causing his death. His velvet coat is well worthy of notice. Although the owner is for ever moving among dirt, he has always a clean appearance. Let us examine the coat—his coat of many colours

as it happens to be—for when thoroughly cleansed, the mole's fur shows a strong iridescence in certain lights, assuming various beautiful tints, a ruddy copper being the most prominent. The hair has no set, it grows in no particular direction, and it may be stroked any way without becoming disordered. The secret of this lies in the fact that each hair is composed of two degrees of thickness, which alternate a number of times in the course of its length. At leaving the skin it is extremely fine, and gradually increases in thickness till it reaches the full width, when it again diminishes, and so on. The character of the skin, which has a strong membranous muscle, helps to preserve cleanliness, as the creature has only to give itself a good shake in order to cast off any earth which may have adhered to the fur.

The mole's worst enemy, the more's the pity, is man. Even before Darwin proved the usefulness of earth-worms, the little gentleman in velvet was as bitterly persecuted as he is to-day. He has surely some redeeming point, and the farmer should extend some mercy to him if only as a drainer. But no. The mole-catcher does his deadly work, calling him all that is bad, while he boasts of his own exploits in destroying him. One man has been known to kill as many as forty thousand, and La Court, their historian, who should have known better, took the lives of six thousand in four months. Fortunately the mole is a pretty wily fellow, so much so, that only experts can thin his family to any great extent. At the same time he is, without doubt, deeply dissatisfied with the present state of the land laws, and would give his hearty support to any government that permitted him to introduce his land bill, under circumstances that precluded all fear of opposition from the tongues of his hated adversaries—steel traps.

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

AFTER LONG YEARS.

BY MRS. CHARLES MATTHEWS.

A BRIGHT June morning after a heavy storm, white clouds scudding quickly across a rain-washed sky, blue waters rushing in on the yellow sands below the little garden that lay all ablaze in the sunshine, with lilies white and orange, and great swaying poppies, their crimson petals flying before the fresh salt breeze.

A day to drive away all sad and gloomy thoughts, and "make one feel quite young again," as Joan Carrington said to herself, as she threw open the window of the little parlour in Mrs. Trueman's lodgings at Sandy Cove, and drank in a deep draught of sweet-scented air.

Not that she had lived so very many years after all, but she had just reached the age when a woman is old or young according to the way in which life has used her, and Joan's youth had slipped noiselessly away as she sat watching by the bedside of her dying father, and left her at thirty with a sweet pale face that had lost its roundness and its dainty bloom, with gentle tired eyes, a thread or two of silver in the soft brown hair from which the golden gleams had faded, and

a few deep lines at the corners of the mobile, sensitive mouth.

She stood a long time at the window, looking out over the stretch of foam-flecked waters, and presently her eyes seemed to have lost the sense of what lay before them, and to be resting on a vision that brought a faint tinge of colour to her cheeks, and a happy little smile to her lips, and it was with a startled look that she turned as she heard the click of the white gate and light footsteps running up the walk.

"Ethel," she cried, as a slim young girl, just blossoming into womanhood, ran up and kissed her as she leant from the window, "where have you been so early? I thought you were upstairs still."

"The sun shone in so brightly on my face, Aunt Joan, that I couldn't sleep, and then I remembered it was the day for the Indian mail, and I thought I would go and meet the postman, so that if your letter had come you might have it sooner."

"And did you get it? Was there—?"

She shook her head and tried to give a serious expression to her laughing lips, and then looking up and seeing the bitter disappointment in Joan's face, she said quickly—

"Yes, I did really—here it is. It is too bad to plague you. Now you shall read it in peace, while I go and see what Mrs. Trueman has for breakfast." And she ran into the house singing as she went, and her voice could be heard presently in the kitchen urging the landlady to send breakfast in at once as the wind had made her so hungry she felt ready to devour the whole household. Which the good-natured old dame received with admiring "Lors" and "Ah! surelys," and soon she was back again in the parlour exclaiming indignantly—

"Aunt Joan, would you believe it, they have forgotten to send the cream."

But receiving no answer to this melancholy announcement, she turned and saw that Joan was leaning against the casement with a white face and half-closed eyes.

"Aunt Joan, darling!" she cried, running to her and taking her in her arms. "What is it? Not bad news? Captain Meredith is not—?"

"No—no, dear," Joan answered, looking up and smiling. "It is good news, the best. He is coming, coming home. He is on his way now."

Ethel's clinging clasp was loosened. She turned away so that her face was hidden.

"Captain Meredith will want you to be married at once, I suppose?" she said presently in a changed voice.

"Yes, he says so," answered Joan, blushing a little, and looking down at her precious letter; "he says we have waited long enough."

"So you have, dear, patient, old Aunt Joan!" cried Ethel remorsefully. "And I am glad, and I am a selfish wretch not to be gladder, but you see I have had you all to myself since grandpapa died last spring, and I am jealous, horribly jealous, of your Captain Meredith."

"Dear Ethel, don't be foolish," Joan said, smoothing the soft hair, as the girl knelt beside her, and buried her face in her lap. "It will only be another person to love and spoil you. You are not going to lose me, dear; I would not give up my child for any one. Philip knows that."

"How good you are! Fancy your having

thought about me at all," said Ethel, looking up with a smile, though the tears were still wet on her April face. "Now if I were in love I don't believe I should care for any one but just the one person I was in love with. You do deserve to be happy, Aunt Joan, you ought never to have another day's sorrow to make up for all those sad years when grandpapa was ill. It was because you wouldn't leave him wasn't it, that you did not go out to India with Captain Meredith long ago?"

"Yes; ten years ago. Just when we were to have been married, father met with the accident that blinded him. I could not leave him, he had only me, and Philip had to go without me. We didn't think then we were parting for so long. They talked of an operation, and if it had been successful I meant to have gone out, but you know it failed, and they thought father would have died. Then when Philip was coming home on leave, he had to give up every penny he had saved to pay his brother's debts. So everything seemed to be against us and to be conspiring to keep us apart, but at last—at last—I think our troubles are over. And now Philip tells me he need not go out again; his uncle has left him a little fortune. So altogether we shall be quite rich. I am very glad for your sake; you would not have liked to leave England, would you?"

"Oh, I shouldn't have minded much if I had had you with me. But how long those years must have seemed to you, Aunt Joan! And you have gone on loving Captain Meredith all the time. How odd it must be to be in love with some one you haven't seen for ten years. Half a lifetime! Why he might be quite altered—quite a different person now!"

"I don't think we shall have any difficulty in recognizing each other," said Joan laughing. "But will you give me some tea, dear. I must go upstairs directly and write to Philip, if I don't send my letter by the early post he will not get it at Malta."

"When is he coming?"

"Next week."

"Oh dear! Only one more week of the old life. It is all very well to say it will make no difference, I know what engaged people are, and I shall earn Captain Meredith's everlasting gratitude by disappearing in the morning to be seen no more till bed-time."

"You silly child, you will do nothing of the kind. Now darling I must go and write my letter to Philip."

"Oh, very well; there it is already you see. Philip, Philip, everything must give way to him."

"Not everything, only my breakfast. Wait till you see him, you'll understand it then."

Joan went up to her room and sat down to write her welcome, but the words did not come very quickly. This sudden blaze of sunshine dazzled her, breaking in upon the grey twilight of her life, this great joy that she had longed for, prayed for as the one good thing left, frightened and bewildered her now it was close at hand, and the passionate heart that had lain buried beneath the gathered sadness of years of patient waiting could not suddenly lift itself to grasp the happiness that would bring new life. When Philip came she thought it would be different, he was always bright and joyous, he would help her to grow young again and

to be once more the light-hearted Joan of the old days.

Suddenly Ethel's words, scarcely heeded when they were uttered, flashed across her mind. "He might be quite a different person now," she had said of Philip, and Joan realized how truly they might have been spoken of herself. How differently she felt about everything now, everything except her love. Had she altered as much outwardly, she wondered. She got up quickly, and opening a casket that held a few cherished trifles that had belonged to her father, she took from it a locket containing a miniature of herself, painted when she had first meant to marry Philip.

She had not looked at it for years, and at the first sight of the face that met her eyes she started.

Had she really been like that before sorrow and anxiety had touched her? How thickly the hair grew round the temples then, in soft, curling, downy locks like Ethel's, how round were the cheeks, how bright the glance of the glad young eyes, how full the curves of the smiling lips, and now—she looked sternly at the face reflected in the shabby little mirror.

"Aunt Joan," cried Ethel's voice, "is your letter ready? The postman is coming up the hill."

"Yes, in a moment," she answered, starting as though she had been discovered in some guilty act; and, throwing down the portrait, she wrote a few hasty words, and took her letter downstairs.

The day wore away very slowly. Joan was restless, excited; nothing interested her; she could settle to nothing. At last, in the afternoon, she resolved to try the effect of a solitary walk. It was an old remedy of hers for any mental disturbance; and many a knotty point had been settled in these lonely tramps.

"Ethel," she called, as she went out, "where are you? I am going along the shore a little way."

"I am here, Aunt Joan," answered a drowsy voice; and Joan, turning in the direction whence it came, found Ethel in a sheltered nook, swinging lazily in the hammock, her gold-brown hair unbound and falling in shining masses over her crisp blue muslin gown, her dainty head pillowed on her rounded arms, while, with one little foot that touched the ground, she rocked herself gently to and fro.

"Oh, stay here, it is so delicious! I was almost asleep when you called."

"No, dearie; I must have a walk. Take care of yourself, my darling; I shall not be long."

"Good-bye, Aunt Joan. I am going in to practice directly;" and she sat up to watch Joan, till she disappeared down the zig-zag path that led to the beach, and then, swinging idly, drifted gradually into dreamland, and awoke with a start an hour after as a few large rain-drops pattered down on her face.

"Oh, dear," she cried with a shiver, "the sun has gone in, and it has grown quite chill. I hope Aunt Joan will be in before the storm comes on in earnest. I wonder how long I have been asleep."

As she passed through her aunt's room on her way to put up her hair, she found Mrs. Trueman closing the windows before the coming storm.

"Dear me, miss," she said, "what a beautiful

pictur' there is of you, to be sure, Miss Ethel. I see it on Miss Carrington's table, and I made so bold as to take a peep."

"A picture of me, Mrs. Trueman!—where?" And she took up the miniature. "This isn't meant for me; it's Aunt Joan when she was young. Don't you see 'Joan Carrington' and the date in little letters round it?"

"You don't say so, miss? Well, my eyes ain't very good certainly, but, for sure, I thought it was you; it's more like you than Miss Carrington a long way."

"Is it? Yes, I do think it is. I didn't know Aunt Joan's hair had ever been that colour; perhaps it wasn't. They always touch up these likenesses a little. How prettily it's done, all twisted up in a knot on the top of her head. I wonder how mine would look like that. I think I will try;" and, carrying off the portrait, she coiled her own bright locks in the same fashion, and then she saw that Mrs. Trueman was right, and that she was wonderfully like the miniature, though the colouring was more delicately vivid in the living face, the brows more distinctly pencilled, the long lashes darker.

"I shall keep my hair like this till Aunt Joan comes in, and ask her if she sees the likeness; and now I will go down and try whether I can induce that dumb piano of Mrs. Trueman's to utter a sound."

"I have lighted a bit of fire, miss" said the landlady, "we shall have the storm directly, and I am afraid Miss Carrington will get wet through, the children saw her ever so far along the shore. The kettle is on the hob, miss."

"Thank you, Miss Trueman, I hope Aunt Joan will come back by the road." She looked anxiously out across the sea, the clouds were gathering fast, and a chill white mist was creeping up. She stirred the fire, fetched Joan's slippers, put her favourite chair for her, and then sat down and began to play. It grew darker and darker, and the firelight danced on the wall, and then no longer able to see the notes before her, she began to sing softly a plaintive little air that she had heard Joan hum to herself sometimes, and never heard the click of the gate or saw a face pressed against the panes but, starting up as the door opened, she turned to welcome Joan, and found herself held fast in a man's strong arms, while tender kisses were showered on her lips, and a glad eager voice, cried—

"Joan, Joan, my darling, at last, at last."

And then before she could speak it went on—

"My Joan, time has gone backward with you, you are younger and more beautiful a thousand times than when we parted."

"Captain Meredith!" she cried, frightened and trembling. "I—I am not Joan."

"Not Joan!" he said, loosing his clasp and staggering back. "Not Joan, when you speak with her voice and look at me with her eyes, and sing the songs she used to sing to me in the old days? If you are not Joan, who are you?"

"I am Ethel Aylesford."

"Ethel Aylesford? Mary's child? I thought she was quite a little girl. Where is Joan, why does she not come to me?"

"She did not expect you, she is out, and, oh, the storm has come," Ethel cried, as a sudden heavy dash of rain-drops against the window made her look up.

"Out where? Let me go to her."

"I do not know which way she will come, you may miss her, you had better wait."

He did not answer, but went to the window, and looked anxiously out through the driving rain that was beating down so cruelly the flowers that had been radiant in their fresh beauty when he came through them such a little while ago; and the silence grew and grew till it seemed to Ethel it would never be broken, when at last she heard the sound of wheels.

"That must be Joan, she has found some one to bring her home, the carrier perhaps. Will you let me go out and tell her you are here? She is not very strong, she nearly fainted this morning when your letter came."

"Yes, go; we will have no more surprises, but you must not keep me from her long."

The wheels had stopped at the gate; he could see some one getting down from the cart, and coming wearily up the walk, some one with clinging wet black draperies, and a white tired face from which the damp hair had been carelessly pushed back.

"Aunt Joan," cried Ethel, running out, heedless of the storm. And the pale lips curved in a little smile.

Joan! Could this be Joan, this worn, weary woman; this pale, shadowy ghost of the girl he had last seen in all the brightness of her youth. In the many, many times he had pictured his meeting with Joan, he had never thought that he might find her changed like this—had never remembered that the years which had brought to him the full vigour of his manhood might have dealt less kindly with her. Now as these two came towards him together it seemed to him that his old love, the bright, beautiful Joan, whose image had been with him through the long years, was leading to him a sad eyed-stranger to take her place, and it was with a conscious effort that he went forward and took in his arms—the woman whom through all the years of absence he had loved with never wavering faithfulness.

Ethel closed the door upon the lovers, and running upstairs threw herself sobbing on her bed. For the first time in her young life she felt forsaken, deserted, not wanted by anyone, and the new experience was very bitter. Then, too, Philip's sudden coming had shaken and frightened her; her cheeks burned at the remembrance of his greeting. If only she had not been so foolish as to twist her hair up like that hateful portrait, perhaps he would not have taken her for Joan.

Anyhow she would soon alter that, and her hands were busy with the long thick coils that were just knotted up in their accustomed fashion at the back of her shapely little head, when she heard Joan's voice calling her.

"Ethel, Ethel. Where are you? Come down, we want you."

She plunged her face into a basin of cold water, and trusting to the darkness to hide the traces of tears she went slowly downstairs.

"Come, darling," said Joan; "make us some tea while I take off my damp dress. Philip tells me you have made each other's acquaintance already. Fancy his coming a week before we expected him! Were you not surprised to see him? Did you know him directly?"

"Yes," said Ethel, turning away and busying

herself with the tea-things. "Aunt Joan your dress is positively wringing wet; you ought to go up at once. Shall I come and help you?"

"No. Stay here and talk to Philip. You must become good friends as soon as you can," she said, laughing as she went out.

Philip had sunk into a chair as she left the room, and was leaning forward, his head resting on his hands, and looking into the fire.

Ethel glanced at him and saw that the brightness was all gone from his face; he had a troubled, anxious look.

Lovers were incomprehensible folk, she thought, here was Captain Meredith, who had been so eager and joyous when he came in, looking quite sad and weary, while Joan, who had seemed almost to dread the meeting, wore a happy smiling face.

When she came in, Philip roused himself, and began to talk and tell them of his life in India and of his voyage home, but through it all Ethel noticed that the glad light never came back to his eyes.

A man's presence has a very invigorating effect on a feminine establishment, and Philip's coming seemed to bring fresh life into the cottage and to make the days pass very quickly away; happy days to Joan, the happiest she had ever known.

Philip had come back to her, scarcely changed from the Philip who had left her ten years ago, she thought at first, and if after a time she fancied he was graver, less joyous, and that something of the old eagerness was gone from his wooing, she remembered that they had been boy and girl in the by-gone days, and, though it was not so with her, with most, love grew calmer with the growing years, and never had he been so watchful and tender in his care for her.

The one cloud in her heaven was the fear that Philip and Ethel were not growing better friends. Philip seemed even to avoid the child, and this she was quick to see and to resent, and she had fallen into the way of going off for long solitary rambles, and, in spite of Joan's entreaties, would seldom take part in anything that Philip proposed for their amusement.

"Who will have a game at tennis with me?" he asked, one morning, as they stood in the garden, discussing their plans for the day. "Come now, before it gets too hot."

"I must speak to Mrs. Trueman first, but Ethel will play, she is a much better match for you than I am. To tell you the truth, Philip, I don't think I shall ever make much of tennis. I have begun too late."

"Nonsense," he said quickly; "you only want practice."

"Well, I will come presently; Ethel will go with you now; won't you, darling?"

"I don't think Captain Meredith cares for a substitute."

"I wish you wouldn't call Philip, Captain Meredith, Ethel."

"What then?"

"Philip, of course."

"I don't think I shall make any change till after September; and then, of course, it will be Uncle Philip."

"Nonsense," he said angrily. "I hate those titles between people who are so nearly of an age. It is absurd your calling Joan, aunt."

"Nearly of an age, Captain Meredith? Twelve years seems to me a considerable difference, and as for Aunt Joan, I couldn't call her anything else. She has been Aunt Joan to me ever since I came to her a desolate mite of a child a great many years ago. You must let that be as it is, whatever else is altered." And she turned away and went quickly down one of the garden walks.

Philip stood watching her with troubled eyes till a turn in the path hid the last flutter of her dress, and then Joan's voice recalled him.

"Philip," she said, "you must not be angry with the child if she is a little wayward at times. Remember, since her mother left her to me she has been like my own, and it is natural, isn't it, that she should be a little jealous?"

"Jealous," he said, looking up quickly. "Do you think she is jealous?"

"Yes, of course; don't you see it? She has always been first with me, and she is jealous of you."

"Of me?" Then after a pause he went on, "Well, it is very absurd, and she must get over it if she is to live with us."

Joan looked up surprised at the harsh tone in which he spoke.

"If, Philip? You know that is settled. You promised me, and you wish it, don't you? Oh, Phil, I couldn't give her up. You didn't mean that, did you?"

"I meant nothing that would hurt you, dear; it shall all be as you wish."

"Yes; and when this has passed away and she is herself again, you will love her, I know, as much as I do."

No answer.

"And, anyhow, we shan't keep her long, I am afraid. Most people think her very pretty—she is pretty, isn't she?"—pausing wistfully for a reply.

"Yes," he said shortly.

"I knew you must think so; and she is such a favourite. Some one will be carrying her off soon, I fear."

"Nonsense! She is much too young to think of such things yet."

"Not much younger than we were, Phil," she answered gently, looking up at him with loving eyes.

"Dear," he said with quick compunction, ashamed of his impatience, and taking her hand in his with answering tenderness.

And so they stood a moment with clasped hands, these lovers, who were farther apart now than when the sea had rolled between them.

And Philip knew it—knew that the old love was dead; how or why he could not tell; but it was dead, no more to be brought back to life than the girl to whom it had been given could be brought back from the past. It was something apart from himself—something that had been with him all these weary years, and now had gone as strangely as it had come; and he could only stand by and watch its going without any power to hold it back. And yet this Joan, whom he had found in the place of his lost love, was gentle and true and sweet—a woman whom a man might be content to serve faithfully all his days, and so he vowed that he would serve her. He would guard every look, every word, that might betray the change in him; she should never look to him for

tenderness, and find him wanting; never guess that she was less to him now than she had ever been.

And deep in his heart there was a far more bitter trouble, which he scarcely dared to face. It was not only that the old love was dead, but that in its place another had sprung to life, strong and vigorous, and defying every effort to stifle it. And the girl who had awakened it, whom he had thought his own when he held her in his arms and kissed her lips, would be always beside him; fate had willed it that he must meet her daily, hourly; though strive as he might against the growing passion, a touch of her hand or a glance from her eyes would leave the battle to be fought over again.

And though as yet Ethel had never dreamed of this, she felt that a new element had entered into her tranquil life. Something that she resented and fought against, that took all the zest from the quiet pleasures she had known, and yet gave a new meaning to the most trivial things.

Why had Philip come to disturb them? she would think, as she lay tossing restlessly on her pillow. Nothing would ever be the same again. She would never now be first again with any one. It was very horrible to be so jealous and irritable and bad-tempered, and Philip must hate her. Did he hate her? Was that why he seemed to avoid her? Well, she had given him good cause, and she would remember remorsefully the sharp things she had said to him, and the sad look she had surprised once in his eyes when her own had met them suddenly, and would resolve to overcome the shy pride that had taken possession of her ever since their meeting—that meeting the mere remembrance of which made her cheeks burn in the darkness.

The end of Philip's visit was drawing very near; he was to leave them for a time, while he went northward to look after the little estate that had been left him, and in September he would join them in London, and he and Joan were to be married.

The lovers were spending the last afternoon on the beach together. Ethel had wandered off by herself round the point into the little bay beyond.

Only one more day Philip thought, as he sat idly throwing pebbles into the water, only one more day to keep guard over his looks and words, and he could be safe, free to be himself, would have no more need to laugh when he was miserable, and seem bright and happy with a weary aching heart, and perhaps when he came back he would be wiser, calmer, and might be able to take Joan's hand and look into her eyes without this wretched sense of treachery.

She was beside him happy and content, even his going could not sadden her. For a little while she would have her child to herself again and then in a few short busy weeks, she and Philip would be once more together, never to be parted, and her eyes filled with happy thankful tears as they rested on the man who was to be beside her through all the coming years.

A sudden shout made her look up, and running along the shore came a little barefoot lad, one of the shrimpers of the village.

"Oh ma'am! oh captain," he cried, breathless,

rushing up to them, "I do believe Miss Ethel be drowned. I seed her out on the big rock that's covered at high water, when I went round the bay two hours ago, and when I came back the tide was up, and I could not see her nowhere, but her book and her gloves be where she left 'em on the beach, and I picked this up, near the point. Oh ma'am, I do think as how she must have stayed out there too long, and been swept off, the water comes in quick, and there be only one narrow way back from that rock, and deep water both sides."

Joan had seized the battered, dripping object the boy held out, and was examining it eagerly. Yes, it was Ethel's hat, the blue ribbons, soaked and discoloured now, she had tied round it herself.

"Oh Phil," she cried with trembling lips, "let us go, perhaps we may see her yet, she may have found shelter somewhere, is there not a cave there at the point? She may have been able to reach it."

"There be a cave surely," said the boy with a smile breaking out on his woe-begone face, "and Miss Ethel knows it, she may be there, but I am afraid the water will be in with this high tide."

"Oh go! go at once, it may be in time, oh Phil, save her for my sake."

"For your sake," he muttered under his breath, "when I would give my life for her, my darling;" and putting her aside as she clung to him, he took the boy by the arm and half carried him down the slope to where the boats lay beached.

Joan followed dizzy and bewildered, but before she could reach them they had launched a boat, and were rowing with all their strength towards the point, and she was left alone motionless watching, watching, every other sense but sight seeming dead. How long the minutes were, how long they had disappeared; when she saw them again, what horrible truth would she have to learn?

Another agony of waiting, and then the boat came round the point. There was only one figure in it, the boy's. He was calling to her, the roar of water drowned his voice, till at last he came nearer, and she heard him shout, "All safe, ma'am. Miss Ethel's in the cave. There's no water, and the capt'n's going to stay till they can come by the shore, he couldn't get the boat close up. He sent me back to tell you."

Then Joan moved for the first time, and throwing herself on the hot burning sand, let loose the tide of bitter grief that had been frozen by the horror of the moment. The look of agony on Philips face and those half-muttered words that had been forced from his white lips had been a lightning flash showing the gulf at her feet. Oh blind, blind! she had never guessed, never for one moment imagined this possibility. That Philip, who had been so faithful all these long, long years, should cease to love her had seemed as unlikely as that the firm earth should suddenly crumble beneath her feet. It was horrible, cruel, was there never to be an end of suffering for her, was her heaped up store of patient love to count for nothing? Had she given her all to have it cast back again as worthless? She lay moaning in her anguish, the fierce sun beating down on her while the moments flew by unnoticed, till at last the first agony had spent itself, and calmer gentle, thoughts came back.

She sat up and looked over the sea, the blue waves were dancing in the sunshine, and the white gulls skimming through their sparkling crests; everything was as it had been before this misery came, but nothing could ever be the same for her. All hope and joy had died when she looked into Philip's face. Poor Philip, and soft pitiful tears rose in her eyes, how he must have suffered, and he had never let her guess the burden he was bearing. "Oh! Philip, my love," she sobbed, "you might have told me. Did you think I could not be as generous as you. Thank God there is yet time. I know you would have been always loving and tender and gentle to me; but some day I should have found it out, some day when it would have been too late. My little Ethel too, no wonder that he loves her. Does she love him too, has she guessed his secret, and tried for my sake to be cold and proud to him? Is this why she has seemed so sad of late, and why the tears come so quickly to her eyes? I thought she was jealous of my love for Philip, but perhaps even with her I am no longer first." And then the agony came back in a bitter wave. Ethel's love, Philip's love, both gone; what was left her, only a long grey dreary life unlighted by any gleams of joy? But at least this could be set right; Philip could be released from his burden, since it had become a burden, and be free to give his love to the child whose happiness was dearer than her own. Then she rose slowly, for far off she saw them coming, and she could not meet them yet, could not look into the face of the man who was separated from her by a gulf more impassable than death, and turning from them she went wearily, wearily up the little path that led to the cottage. Yes, they were coming, coming in silence.

For once Ethel's courage had almost failed her when waking up from a day-dream she had found herself surrounded on all sides by the deepening water. To reach the shore was impossible; the waves were already roaring over the narrow pathway, and would sweep her off and dash her to pieces if she tried to cross; the water was already almost level with the rock, when she suddenly thought of the cave. She would have to leap an ugly chasm to reach it, but it was her only chance, and, without giving herself time to think or to look down into the seething water, she sprang and found herself safe, for from the point she had reached she could scramble easily to the cave into which the water came only at the highest tides. Was this a high tide? She could not remember, and she sat watching the water creep nearer and nearer, when suddenly she heard Philip's voice shouting, "Ethel! Ethel!" and the boat came in sight.

"I am here—here safe, Philip! Do not bring the boat, there are rocks all round. Go back; tell Joan I am safe; the water is turning now. I will wait till I can get back."

But he was out of the boat and springing over the rocks to her.

"You are safe, you are not hurt?" he cried, taking her hands and looking wildly in her face, forgetful of everything but the sudden relief.

"Safe! yes, of course," she said, frightened at his vehemence, and trying to speak lightly. "I got in here quite easily. Did you think you were rid of me?"

"Ethel," he said in a hoarse voice, letting her hands fall; "child, you are very cruel."

She looked up and saw the misery in his eyes, and then turned her own away, and they sat in silence, while the water ebbed farther and farther, and at last they were free to go.

"Come," he said, holding out his hand, and she went with him without once looking up, and in almost unbroken silence.

"Miss Carrington's lying down, miss," said Mrs. Trueman, bustling out to meet them; "she was rare upset about ye, but it's all ended right, miss, and you're quite safe, aren't ye?"

"Yes; but I have lost my hat, it blew off when I jumped from the rock. I am going up to Joan," she said to Philip, and left him.

Joan was lying in the twilight of closely drawn blinds, but at the sound of Ethel's footsteps as she stole softly up to the bed she held out her arms.

"Aunt Joan, I frightened you; I am so sorry. Oh, forgive me," she cried, with a sob which was half a confession, and the bright head was pillowed on the tender heart which had been its refuge in so many childish griefs.

"Dear, I have nothing to forgive," Joan said, answering the unspoken words. And in the long, loving kiss that followed, the last drop of bitterness melted from her heart, and she thanked God again that there was yet time to set things right.

It was evening when she came down, quiet and pale, but gentle as ever.

"Philip," she said, "will you come out with me a little?"

"Yes," he answered, without looking up; "if you wish it, if you are able."

"I should like it. Ethel is down on the shore watching for the boats, they will be coming in directly, let us go down."

They went down the path, and at the foot of the cliff Joan stopped.

"Philip, I have something to say to you, will you let me say it here?"

Her face was white and rigid, and the hand that held his arm was trembling.

She sank down on the sand and tried once or twice to speak, while he stood with averted face dreading what her words would be. She had meant to tell him calmly what she had told herself in the silent hours in which she had fought out her battle, but now, that he was beside her and her first word would part them for ever, the word was very hard to say.

"Oh, Phil!" she cried at last; "you might have trusted me."

"Dear," he said hoarsely; "I hoped you would never have known. I have tried very hard that you should not, but I am afraid this morning I said something——"

"Something that told me the truth, but you must not be sorry. I am glad; thankful that I knew it in time. Oh, Philip, I know you would always have been good to me, but I should have found it out, dear. Looking back now I feel I must have been very blind not to have found it out before. You could not help it, it was not your fault."

"God knows I never had a thought that was not faithful to you, Joan, all those years. You were always to me the one woman in the world, and it was not till I came back that—that——"

"That you knew your love was dead. Philip, you must not think that I regret the years we have been lovers, the thought of you made all that time bright, and if it were to come over again, and I could foresee the end, I would choose to have had it so. Nothing can ever take away the memory of the days when you loved me, they—they are a part of me for ever."

"Joan, you speak as if it were all past. Can we not forget this misery that has come between us, and be still as we have been?"

"Never—never again, Phil! I know your heart has gone from your keeping; you couldn't help it, dear. If, presently, you can win my darling's love, be very gentle with her, make her happy, and I shall be content. See there she is, go and bring her to me. I will wait here."

He turned and looked at the slim girlish figure gleaming white against the opal sea, and then bending, took Joan's hand and kissing it reverently held it in his own; but she drew it slowly, slowly from his clasp, and after a moment's silent pause he went.

And she sat on and watched his going, while the evening shadows crept up round her, but far out, across the gleaming sands, the sun was shining, and down the golden pathway walked the two that she loved best.

IN BROWNING'S COUNTRY.

BY W. SIMS.

AND from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run?" asks Hervé Riel, when he has leave to go ashore, after saving the French fleet. Only a run, and if it be made with summer skies overhead, one of the most delightful, surely, which remains to the jaded tourist. For he must do the distance in a yacht, a trader, a sailing-boat or not do it at all. We did it in a trader—my friend and I—got a deck passage for nothing from London Bridge, and paid three shillings a day for our food. There was some difficulty with the skipper—an excellent, dutiful man, with no manners to speak of, who found out that our passes were signed for the next steamer, not for his. Forthwith, he made up his mind that one or both were bolted criminals, and instead of having us on the bridge, passing his spy-glass, and being affable all round, he took to telling us that he had been a policeman once in his time, down in Victoria, and he knew law, and he was master of his ship, he was, and what did we want to see his sanguinary chart for? Notwithstanding this good man's wrath—and it was justifiable—we made the run from Channel Islands to Croisic in a highly satisfactory manner. True, we had to wait till the crew and the officers had their meals before we could get one. There were only four sailors and four persons in the engine-room, so we had not to wait long, and when we got a meal it was set out on a plank, steadied on a couple of coal-buckets. But, with an appetite freshened with a fresh wind from the Bay of Biscay, and a canopy of violet sky overhead, we did not feel as if we were eating in a kitchen. And four meals a day for three shillings! Really sailors do not understand business, God bless them! Hervé Biel does not take the trouble to describe his impres-

sion of his run from Malo to Croisic; perhaps it is because he is not a professional describer, which makes a difference. He only asks leave to run, and off he goes, and gets ashore for his holiday, as if there were no craggy shore of Brittany, no outlying islands, no strange views and picturesque boats. How to give one's impression of the ground covered by Hervé? Well, we ran down the side of Guernsey at mid-day. Here a little historical discussion takes place, and the captain with his eye on the pass and knowing he has to do with convicts, observes:—

"Them islands! Who do they belong to? Hus—hus, to be sure. English, they are. King Alfred, he got 'em for us somehow, and there they are to this day. Don't you contradict me. I've run this passage for fifteen years, I have, and I know where I am. 'Twas Alfred, I say; 'twaren't the Conqueror, nor Joolus Cazar. No, you can't have the chart to look at!"

It is a distressing little misunderstanding about the pass, for the skipper's disobligement continues all down the route. Still that he is a skipper is evident, for he dearly loves to take short cuts, and takes them all along Finisterre to Belle Ile, amid fog and deceptive lights and enigmatic soundings, and comes out of it without breaking the back of his scow.

"No, I won't show you my chart, though, till I see you're comin' home again o' me. This sanguinary pass ain't all right. No, it ain't."

We coast Finisterre, Morbihan and Loire Inferieure. Alas, why is it that one coast is so much like another? Why is it that there is no new thing under the sun? Finisterre! Morbihan! The sun on this particular run is hot and strong, but we seem to have seen these grey cliffs before. They are not to be confounded with the chalky cliffs of Dover or Beachy Head. The only shining white is at the verge of the waves, where the sands stretch; the cliffs are iron; they might be Cornwall or Caithness, Cornwall by preference, though the towns which show in the clefts and inlets are very Scotch. The same permanent masonry, the same hard church towers, the same rigidity, as if Calvin had been the architect and John Knox the builder of them. Yes, we must have seen them before—in a dream or something. They are not new, these shining sands and the worn crags, with the sea-birds hastening between them and the blue, blue sea. It is late afternoon—the third out from the Thames—when we pass inside Belle Ile.

"That's a convict settlement, that is," says the skipper, turning towards his deck passengers and pointing towards the treeless plain of Belle Ile.

To be a settlement of that description, it sends out very fine specimens of men. There is but a light breeze on the water, and it carries a hundred boats towards the Breton shores in search of sardines. Here, in one boat flying a flag, with a mainsail and a jib and a driver, all as white as mountain snow, comes Hervé Riel himself and a comrade—pilots both. Hervé strides to the helm of his boat, and his comrade leaps deftly aboard with a dozen sardines in a napkin. Surely the sea lends itself to beauty!

As the Palais boats sail round about us, we see some of the finest-looking men afloat, a little round perhaps, owing to salad oil, but with such brightness of expression, such obvious regular

feeding, on such good terms with mother sea, that we sail out of their fleet with regret, and see Hervé, on the forward side of his driver, waving his arm at his comrade, who takes us into the Loire, knowing for certain that he is the identical hero of Browning's poem. And at this point, just between Belle Ile and the opening of the mighty river, my friend becomes transfixed.

"Now, this is Browning's country," he says. "Here—all between Croisic and Pornic. Listen to me, before we run into the river, and hear what the genius of the place is."

I listen, and he proceeds, notwithstanding that I have a *Proverbial Philosophy* in a bag, and may spring it on him afterwards.

Croisic, the spot of sandy rock which juts spitefully northward, bears nor tree nor shrub
To tempt the ocean, show what Guérande shuts
Behind her, past wild Baitry, whose Saxons grub
The ground for crystals grown where ocean gluts
This promontory's breadth with salt; all stub
Of rock and stretch of sand, the land's last strife
To rescue just a remnant for dear life.

And what life! Here was, from the world to choose,
The Druid's chosen chief of homes; they reared—
Only their women—mid the slud and ooze
Of you low islet—to their men, revered
In strange stone quire—a temple. May-dawn dews
Saw the old structure levelled; when there peered
May's earliest eve-star, high and wide once more
Up towered the new pile perfect as before.

I wake
No memories of what is harsh and stern
In ancient Croisic nature, much less rake
The ashes of her last warmth till out leaps
Live Hervé Riel, the single spark she keeps.

The single spark on the bridge of the scow gets us into the Loire when the moon is high, and the dock-gates of St. Nazaire well closed for the night. Shall we have a boat ashore? The skipper growls. A boat for convicts; he is not very certain; still, being a skipper, he thinks he will give us a last chance of escape, and orders a boat into the river, and we are hauled into the little ship-building town, when the lights are going out and everybody is about to go to bed.

St. Nazaire! I am afraid I never heard of it till I was in it. Not so with my comrade, who knew that there was some architectural treasure somewhere worth transferring to his note-book—either there or at Nantes, higher up the river, I have forgotten which. What is there to say about St. Nazaire which the Diamond Guide Book has not already said, with Gallic sense and brevity? A cathedral in a corner, a dock-yard, three hotels, a dolmen, a market. The Diamond Guide Book contains all the details. The point is, what does it not contain? How they sup at St. Nazaire. And that is always an important point. We sup, for choice, at the Messageries Hotel, as it has a cosmopolitan sound; and after the tail end of the Bay of Biscay, at three shillings a day, a real meal is very welcome. Madame, of the hotel, knows English very well indeed. "Oh, yes, all right," she can say, with the same ease and intonation as M. Jacquot, her grey parrot chained to a stake outside the window of the little vine-clad court, where our cold fowl, our salad, our wine—white by preference—our Roquefort, and bread, and pippins, and politeness are all served up together. Talking of parrots, St. Nazaire

contains more than any other town in Europe. A man may have no jacket to speak of, but he is sure to have a parrot. It is the note of respectability, like the English gig, and the parrot is flaunted in a front seat everywhere, chained, it is true, but allowed to be as eloquent as he likes, and some sad swearing he indulges in. Parrots are not indigenous to St. Nazaire. They bring them there; being a sailor town it is probably the present most thought of on a return from distant parts. A lazy observer might go through St. Nazaire and leave it with but one impression—parrots; whereas the docks are so important that they build higher class ships on them than they do on the Tyne; and the cathedral, such as it is, has a reredos, faded but splendid, and the boulevards are very tolerable, which behind the cathedral look towards the sea.

They expected a visitor when we were at St. Nazaire. They did not know when he might come. They knew that he had arrived in the southern ports, and was burying his victims by the score or hundred a day. Microbe! He came to St. Nazaire a month or two later, and killed a few people; and, not knowing what wind might blow him, the people were chary about their food, subdued and uneasy. "If he does not come now, he will come in spring," prophesied an ancient man at a café door, as he saturated himself with absinthe. Spring has arrived, however, and microbe has not claimed a victim. Still, as long as he lasted, he did very good grave-digger's work. No recent war can count up so many victims. It is to be hoped that being discovered and described, he will keep well away from St. Nazaire and elsewhere. He should be content, having got inside so many European cabinets—Russian, English, French, Italian, all slaying away. "Bravo, M'Robe," one might imagine King Death saying. "Bravo! great Prime Minister of Europe for the nonce. Clear out the overcrowded houses. Teach them sanitation. Have at them, till their red eyes and haggard faces show signs of penitence."

How to describe the Loire? A river is always a difficult thing to describe, especially when there are no mountains, and all the way up to Nantes the Loire flows serene, slow, grey-blue through rich, flat meadow-land, with few points for the pen or pencil to catch. Villages there are in any quantity, islands dividing the river into alien streams, steamers lying at anchor, or going to or coming from the sea, hay-barges anchored in mid-stream, fishermen fishing, and women washing, and men drinking. Our own boat is a triumph of architecture—runs along at twenty miles or so an hour, has magnificent dining saloons, splendid rooms for smoking in, all the papers of France on the tables in her reading-room, and her decks attended to by as handsome and smart a crew as could be seen. With this part of the Loire we have one historical association not in the guide-books. Scene, a galley in mid-stream. Period, 1548. Characters, a round dozen of Scotch gentlemen bound with chains. But let Dr. M'Crie tell the story.

"From Rouen they sailed to Nantes, and lay upon the Loire during the following winter. Solicitations, threatenings, and violence were all employed to make the prisoners recant their religion, and countenance the Popish worship. But

so great was their abhorrence of its idolatry that not a single individual of the whole company could be induced to symbolize. They covered their heads as soon as service began. One day a fine painted image of the Virgin was brought into one of the galleys, and presented to a Scot prisoner to kiss. He desired the bearer not to trouble him, for such idols were accursed, and he would not touch it. The officers roughly replied that he should; put it to his face, and thrust it into his hands. Upon this he took hold of the image, and watching his opportunity, threw it into the river, saying '*Lat our Ladie now save herself; she is lycht anoughe, lat hir leirne to swyme.*' After this they were no more troubled in that way."

So much for John Knox and his contempt for images on this wide plane of unruffled river. Had he but foreseen what was to happen at Nantes, how it was to become the Protestant home of France, how it was to rear artisans able and willing to die for their faith, how later on they were ordered to die for it, and carried their artisanship and faith to England, and became the founders of strong Huguenot families! His prophetic vision did not go so far into the future, but we may not sail up the Loire without seeing the vision of the angry mar, gruff and determined, flinging the doll into the water, and declining to kiss it. I wonder if these fat priests moving about on deck know of the incident? I shall step across and ask.

Nantes, after three hours' sailing, and a mighty surprise it is, by way of towns. We had argued somewhat in this way. Nantes is in Brittany. Brittany is, physiologically, the west of Scotland. The capital of the west of Scotland is Oban. Nantes will be like Oban. No, not in the least. It is much better worth a visit, though nobody goes to it, no doubt because home steamboats are wanting. I don't speak of historical association, which is a sentiment, but of actual situation which affects the eye and the judgment. The river rises at Nantes, and the town hangs, beetle-browed, right over the stream and the bridges. Then there are islands, any amount of them, and though industry is not wanting, Nature keeps the surroundings sweet and clean with flowers and foliage. And between the islands are streams, over which are numberless bridges and numberless people—the picturesque contents of tobacco factories, the black labourers from the forges, the porters who have been waiting all day for a job without success, and what not—all visible from any part on the right bank. Nantes, i.e., middle-class Nantes, has all gone away to La Saisiac, to Pornic, and to Croisic—to study Brown-ing, says my comrade of the trip. To get out of the way of M'Robe, say I, and to bathe, and take salad oil, and get fatter and fatter before they come back again. But Nantes? There be those who can pick out the heart of a town in a sentence. It is a divine gift vouchsafed not to this scribe. All I can say is that Nantes was out of town, that the town which lay there on that autumn evening with its sloping boulevards, sleeping cathedrals and tortuous ancient streets, seemed to me worthy of any capital I had ever seen. A sunset behind the Château left so many pale violet and crocus colours that we walked silent and entranced till they had melted away. St. Peter's Cathedral

was filled with such supernal melody that we walked out among the widows and orphans—Frenchmen don't go to church—feeling that John Knox might have been a little hard on the poor images further down the river. And that evening at the *Café Chantant*, where all the blackguards of the town were assembled, we could see that, though not a capital, Nantes could show all a capital's contrasts.

HERRINGS.

VARIOUS interesting observations have lately been recorded in the Scottish Blue-Books concerning herring and other fisheries. In one of his addresses, Professor Huxley assured his auditors that "an acre of sea was more productive than an acre of land," and this theory would seem demonstrated by the practically unlimited supply of such fish as herrings, mackerel, cod, ling, pilchards, and others. The name of herring is said to be derived from the German "Heer," signifying a host or army; in allusion, probably, to their inexhaustible numbers. It has recently been ascertained that herring fry and sprats are distinct species. The herring usually spawns in water ten to twelve fathoms deep, and selects a coarse, gravelly bottom, into which the ova sinks and adheres. During the spawning season the fish is not eager in search of food, which then appears a secondary consideration; it feeds principally on small crustacea, tiny sprats, and worm-like sagitta. After the spawning season is over, the "shotten" fish becomes voracious; and if captured is usually found with its stomach distended by food, with which Dame Nature teaches it to recuperate its exhausted forces; and it now becomes fat and comely, and lays in a store of nutrition to serve against the next spawning season. The fry emanating from spawn deposited in March is alive and swimming in May; the youngsters attain a size of one to two inches in June; in September they are four inches long, and at this stage of their existence they set out to seek their fortunes in life, by migration. At the end of the third month tiny scales appear; the white herring is now termed "white-bait," and some of their species are promoted to the proud distinction of forming part of the annual Ministerial banquet at Greenwich. There is a theory extant that there are probably several kinds of herring—deep-sea and coast fish. However this may be, we know that this fish dislikes heat and light; that it constantly migrates to deeper waters; and that twice annually, in the spring and autumn, it visits our shores. It has been observed that occasionally, for several seasons, herring catches are comparatively small, and then, for some unexplained causes, the yield unexpectedly becomes superabundant, as in the takes of this and of last year. We are informed that some few years since three hundred boats sufficed for the herring fishery on the eastern coast of Scotland; now, however, two thousand are found insufficient. Mr. Dougall adduced a singular reason in explanation of the apparent caprice of the herring. He states that the return of the superfluous fish to the sea, or the wholesale destruction of those taken in the wide-meshed, circular nets, which are occasionally too heavy to be landed, and so are cut adrift, and allowed with their weight of dead fish to sink into

the water, is the real cause of the desertion by the herring of certain localities.

The fish is easily killed; and when enveloped within these circular nets, a shoal is more or less crushed into a mass by the tightening of the net to ensure their capture; many fall into the sea dead. With instinctive sagacity the herring avoids for the future the tabooed spots in which so many of their kind have perished. Mr. Dougall mentions, as an instance, the Loch Fyne herring fishery, justly esteemed the finest in Scotland. The shoals would not cross their former "happy hunting-grounds"—the pellucid depths of lovely Loch Fyne, which unhappy past experience had convinced them was fatal to their brethren—but passed away into the more turbid waters of the Clyde in preference. Here they were plentiful, and so innocently unsuspecting, that they could even be taken by the simple expedient of dipping ordinary gardening baskets from the sides of the boats!

The ancient, time-honoured method, free from all danger of "scare" to future generations of herrings, was to catch them by means of hanging nets, buoyed by leaden weights, to maintain a perpendicular position in the water, so that each fish captured during the night—herrings do not enter needlessly into peril in daylight—was caught in a noose by the head; and when lifted from the sea almost immediately expired. It is mentioned as a singular fact that these herrings, being alive when caught in this manner, assist in lifting the nets by a simultaneous upward movement, possibly to escape pressure as they are being withdrawn from the sea. When captured in these hanging nets the heads of fully grown fish are thrust through so far only as to frustrate an attempt to withdraw, when by reason of the obstruction formed by their gills they cannot pass their bodies through the meshes.

The herring lately fell into some disfavour on account of its being occasionally infested by small thread-like entozoa, which however, according to Professor Tyndall, would appear innocuous to human beings. No one who has enjoyed the luxury of daintily served fresh herrings for breakfast will despise such "hale some farin," to which our neighbours the Dutch are especially addicted. The principal curing place is Wick, where this industry takes the same standing as Yarmouth does in England. In the latter town, curing has been practised since the reign of Henry I., when, according to the historian Turrell, a tax of 10,000 fish was paid annually.

Fish of all kinds devour herring spawn, and the fish itself has innumerable foes; those of the bird kind, such as gulls, gannets, and others; fish also prey upon it, the cod, ling, dog-fish, conger, and several others, not to mention the unwieldy porpoise, and one or two sorts of sea monsters which follow in the wake of the herring shoals, intent on devouring their delicate finny prey. It has been ascertained from the quantities of cod and ling only taken on the Scotch coasts during one season that more herrings must have been consumed by these fish alone than 48,000 fishermen could have taken! The recent Fisheries Exhibition did much to promote general interest in piscatorial subjects, and during the past Session no fewer than five statutes have been enacted for the preservation of our fish supplies.

E. GOATLEY.

THE GREAT REMEDY.

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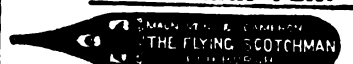
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A FLUTTERED DOVECOTE.

BY H. E. CLARKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DOVECOTE.

SHE stood at the open garden-gate, swinging her straw hat, and looking dreamily down the straggling street of the quiet village that now lay sleeping in the sun. Behind her, the garden flamed and glowed in midsummer glory, a florid background emphasizing by contrast the girlish grace of her figure. The midsummer sun was high, the midsummer sky was cloudless; there was no sound save the brief chirp of the busy birds, and the drowsy hum of bees. The crooked picturesque village street—with its odd mixture of thatched cottages, old red-brick houses with gabled roofs, tumble-down taverns, and occasional spick-and-span modern dwellings—was entirely empty, except for a stray pig, who lay wallowing in the deep dust contentedly. After a while a lazy, dissipated looking dog emerged from a gateway, as though he had just got out of bed, shook himself, yawned, and proceeded, in default of other occupation, to examine the pig, marching slowly round it, and emitting supercilious sniffs as he went. Apparently he was not able to satisfy himself without closer investigation, for after a while he approached cautiously and smelt the carcass over from tail to snout, with infinite care, and a manifest sense of the importance of coming to a right decision in the matter; in the end his attentions provoked an explosive grunt, and a movement of so threatening a character, that he hastily decided to forego further research, and trotted off, with the air of having suddenly remembered at important engagement elsewhere. And then pig and street slept again, and Mary

Hawthorne stood watching them, and swinging her hat as before.

She was a handsome girl of nineteen, with a bright untroubled face that no great sorrow had ever clouded; and no strong passion had ever scarred; a girl whose nature was not yet definitely and altogether awake. Her eyes were bright and sometimes restless, but the general expression of her face was one of quiet and repose. It might have seemed to an observer that some of the superabundant inertia of the village she lived in had impressed itself upon her temperament, and checked her development. And this was not impossible, for Long Drayton is probably as sleepy a village as one can find in the three kingdoms. It lies in the fruitful Midlands, and devotes itself to a placid tilling of the soil; it is far from any great city; its nearest railway station is six miles off, at the small market town of Whittleham; and our modern disease of unrest is as effectually shut out as by a strict quarantine. To lie on a summer evening on the village green, and watch a score or so of old fellows intent upon bowls, while old Martin, host of the neighbouring "Chequers" public-house, reads and comments upon last week's news as supplied by the *Whittleham Advertiser*, and the old rooks caw criticism of a more or less contemptuous kind from the tree-tops—thus to do is to put back the clock of time for a hundred years at least, and to forget railways, and telegraphs, and evolution, and the persistence of force, as though they had never been, or, at any rate, had never been discovered.

Everything and everybody falling under the influence of this Sleepy Hollow of a place becomes ere long slow and lazy. Time himself cannot resist the spell, and a summer day at Long Drayton is as long as two days in an ordinary village. One is continually marvelling at the unwonted dilatoriness of one's watch, and by nine o'clock in the evening, utterly worn out with the interminable length of the day, the new comer falls asleep—wherever he may be, or whatsoever doing—riding, walking, talking, or even making love.

The business man from London, whom chance strands here for a day or so, finds his worried careworn face taking an expression of childlike repose, and his business habits wither and fall from him like autumn leaves, and he keeps important letters, and cannot make up his mind to answer them. In a week or so, if he stays so long, which is rare, he will forget to shave, and will show himself in public in a soft felt hat. In a fortnight, he will play at bowls on the green, and then it is all over with him, and he is "lost to life, and use, and name, and fame" for ever.

"Heigho!" said Mary Hawthorne, ceasing to swing her hat and yawning wearily; "heigho, what a glorious day it is, and how dreadfully tired I am!"

From which the alert reader will at once, and rightly, conclude that Mary had been to a boarding-school.

She had scarcely spoken when something happened at the farther end of the deserted street. A cart containing a mighty load of hay hove in sight, and then another, and after that one more. Mary watched the approaching procession critically for a while, and then put on her hat.

"They look like Hugh's," she said half aloud. And then in the same tone, as a man's figure came in view, "Yes—there he is." And she brushed an imaginary speck of dust off the bosom of her dress, and arranged her cuffs, and waited.

The carts lumbered along slowly and painfully; the man in charge of each (to call him "driver" would be a misnomer) sat on the shaft, half-buried in the hay, and to all appearance slumbered peacefully. I think the horses were asleep too, for the first did not see the sleeping pig till he had nearly trodden upon it. Then he stopped to reflect whether he had better go round or over, and the pig, roused by the rumble, raised himself upon his fore-legs, and confronted his disturber with grave dignity. Probably they would have remained severally in these positions for some time had not the young man, who was striding along on the side-walk, come to the rescue. The pig retreated in confusion, and the procession went on. When it reached the gate at which Mary Hawthorne stood, the young man stopped, and left the carts to go their way without him. He was a broad-shouldered giant, standing six-feet something, with a red, sun-burnt face, and a yellow beard and moustache; well-built, strong, solid—satisfactory from a feminine point of view, if he had been handsome, which he was not, and if much walking over ploughed fields, and much wearing of heavy boots had not given him rather a clumsy shambling gait, which they had. In his eyes, which were of no particular colour, the Long Drayton repose nearly amounted to sleepiness. He smiled, a rather wide smile if truth must be told, as he came to a standstill before Mary, and said—

"Hullo!"

Mary's lips instantly compressed themselves into a rosebud of delightful primness; there was the faintest suspicion of an upward movement of her straight brows.

"Good morning," she said briefly.

Hugh laughed a placid laugh, as though he felt himself reproved, but did not mind it; the laugh of the angler at the antics of the fish he knows

he can land when he will; the laugh of the betrothed man who has no misgivings.

I do not think Mary quite liked it, for she assumed an expression of such intense unconcern as no one ever yet wore without trying very much, and looked down the street, where there was nothing to see, as though she were expecting something of importance to occur there immediately.

"That's the last of my hay," said Hugh after a pause, waving his hand in the direction of the vanished carts; "we've got it up very well to year."

"That's a provincialism," remarked Mary, still gazing down the empty street. "To year," she repeated with dainty contempt; "what an absurd expression!"

She felt that she was getting out of temper about nothing at all; and, suddenly catching sight of Hugh's broad, good-tempered face, clouded with a dim puzzlement of wonder, she broke into a low laugh, and recovered herself.

"Cousin Rupert is coming to-night," she said, to change the subject. "He has telegraphed to say he will be at Whittlesham this evening at six, and papa is going to meet him with the dog-cart. Tell Mrs. Meredith we expect her to come to supper with you to-night to meet her 'pretty little boy.'"

"Ah, that was always mother's name for him," said Hugh; "but he must be a man now."

"He is only two years younger than you are," remarked Mary; "he will be twenty-two in the autumn, and it is twelve years since his father took him away from us."

"He was a lively little chap," said Hugh, "and plucky too. I remember he thrashed me once because I said I meant to marry you when I grew up."

Hugh laughed aloud at the recollection. "I expect I could thrash him now," he added, glancing complacently at his mighty limbs.

"He was a clever boy," said Mary. "Do you remember what wonderful games he used to invent for us?"

"Yes," said Hugh with a grin. "I was always the villain; he was always the hero, and your marriage and my death used to end them all, till I wouldn't die any more."

Mary had become suddenly thoughtful. "I wonder what he is like now," she said. "They say he is likely to succeed as a painter."

"I expect he wears long hair, and dirty nails, and a velvet coat," said Hugh, summing up briefly the ideas connected in his mind with the word.

"Rubbish!" exclaimed Mary with perhaps more energy than was absolutely necessary. "You seem to think"—she broke off abruptly, and looked annoyed.

"Well, we shall see this evening," remarked Hugh, moving away. "I'll tell mother," he added, speaking over his shoulder as he went; "she's sure to come."

Mary shut the garden-gate, and went back to the house with a thoughtful face.

CHAPTER II.

THE FLUTTERER.

MR. HAWTHORNE, Mary's father, was a kindly but

not very forcible old gentleman, whose garden was his chief joy, and whose religion was his chief trouble. He belonged to a strict and puritanical "persuasion," and attended chapel at Whittlesham every Sunday. He firmly believed that the greater part of his fellow-creatures would be eternally tormented, and yet he found a great deal of good in them, and could not help thinking that their sins were quite as much the result of weakness as of wickedness. Wherefrom sprang permanent confusion and perplexity of mind, only to be allayed in his case by horticulture. His wife had been dead many years, and Mary was his only child. His sister Emily had married, much against his will, Jules Gerard, a French poet and political refugee, whom she met during a visit to London, and had died when Rupert, her only child, was two years old.

Mr. Hawthorne had, as may well be supposed, nothing in common with the Frenchman. Gerard was an inexplicable enigma to him. A man who attended no place of worship—did not have his meals regularly—got up sometimes at four o'clock to see the sun rise, sometimes stayed in bed till the evening, and sometimes sat up all night writing verses, what could he be but a stumbling and a rock of offence to the respectable, conventional member of the great English middle-class? Mr. Hawthorne had offered to give the motherless child a home, for his sister's sake, and this offer had been accepted. But when the child grew to boyhood, his father had become prosperous, and he naturally desired to take the education of his son into his own hands, and naturally also, when he had done so, communication between the families gradually ceased.

Gerard, who was a scholar, became himself the boy's tutor, and as the pupil was bright, and quick, and willing, the arrangement was much more successful than might have been anticipated. And when Rupert showed himself more fond of sketching, and of daubing with colours than of anything else, this very un-English father was delighted beyond measure, and did everything in his power, by taking him to picture-galleries, by giving him the biographies of great painters to read, and by providing him with the best masters, to awaken in him the ambition of becoming an artist.

In this he was perfectly successful; and being at length allowed to return to his native country, he took Rupert to Paris, to study, and to "see life." This he did for some five years, when he saw death. For his father, walking with him in the public thoroughfare, and making some trivial remark about the weather, or the shops, dropped dead at his side with the sentence unfinished. His money was invested in England, and after the funeral Rupert's presence was necessary in London; and when the legal business was ended, a sudden longing seized him to revisit the scenes of his childhood, and to renew his acquaintance with his old playfellows, ere he pursued his present intention of going to Morocco to study as Fortuny and Regnault had done before him.

He had gone to a dame's school with Mary and Hugh in the old days; he remembered her as a fair little toddling girl, remarkable for the earnestness and gravity with which she worked at everything, especially games. Of Hugh, his recollection was less distinct, but he had a dim idea of him as a lumpish boy, not without cunning, but

slow and a little dull, and on the whole objectionable rather than otherwise.

And sleepy old Long Drayton, what an impossible place it seemed to him now! He remembered the straggling street, ablaze and asleep in the summer sunshine, with the swallows, that built every year under the eaves of the houses, swooping backward and forward through it all day long. Had he not made some mistake? Was not Long Drayton a dream altogether? In a world where Paris and London were undoubted facts, Long Drayton, as he recollected it, must surely be a fantasy.

He was an odd fellow; he loved to loiter about old scenes, and recall by their aid bygone emotions. There was a cobbler's shop at Long Drayton, with an old-fashioned half-door; he could just see over it when he left. He remembered the old spectacled cobbler sitting on a bench in the middle of the low room, tap-tap-tapping at a boot held between his knees. A great yearning seized him to see the old place again—and this might be his last chance. They had all been very kind to him, even the old cobbler. By Jove, he would go, and, by Jove, he would go at once!

He was walking in the Strand when he came to this decision, and instantly precipitated himself into a telegraph office, and launched a message, announcing his immediate arrival, at his unsuspecting uncle, who, besides being frightened out of his wits, had to pay five shillings portage upon it.

Mr. Hawthorne was a good deal perturbed by the news. He had never approved, as we said before, of Jules Gerard, and he had been glad when Rupert was taken away from Long Drayton. He was too flighty, Mr. Hawthorne remarked. There was a want of seriousness about him. He was not exactly the companion to be desired for Mary.

Now he turned the pink paper helplessly in his hands, and gazed reproachfully at his daughter, who had not been able to restrain a cry of delight at the prospect of seeing her old playmate again.

"My dear," he protested, "really, my dear!" Then, settling his spectacles, he resigned the paper to her, remarking with a sigh, "Well, if he will come, we must entertain him, I suppose."

"If you mean that for a welcome, pa, there is rather an absence of warmth about it," said Mary.

"I have my doubts about him," resumed Mr. Hawthorne; "I shouldn't wonder if he were gay—"

"But you can't expect him to be as dull as the people about here, pa," interposed Mary; "at least, not all at once. They've spent years in getting to their present state of perfection."

"You know what I mean," replied Mr. Hawthorne reproachfully. "And I don't like to hear you talk of your neighbours in that way, Mary; it does not show a nice spirit. Rupert's father"—here Mr. Hawthorne's tone deepened in rather a tragic way—"Rupert's father was a Frenchman—"

"Good gracious, pa! surely Rupert is not to blame for that," burst out Mary; but Mr. Hawthorne refused to notice the interruption.

"I disapprove of that nation," he continued

gravely. "They have scarcely any religion, and their morality is shockingly loose. But there, if he will come, he must come, I suppose; and that's the end of it."

With these words Mr. Hawthorne drifted slowly out into the garden, leaving Mary in a state of suppressed indignation.

"I shall break something one of these days—I know I shall," she said to herself, biting her handsome lips when he was gone. "To hear them talk, one would think that English Dissenters were the only good people in the world. It makes me long to be a Roman Catholic or something."

This was the most shocking thing Mary could think of at the moment, and she was rather satisfied with it, and sat down to her needlework feeling relieved.

Mr. Hawthorne, having potted about his garden for an hour so, returned to the house, very dirty and very happy. His forebodings had entirely vanished.

"I have told Tom"—Tom was the groom, gardener and general factotum—"I have told Tom to put the horse in, and I shall drive over to Whittleham to meet Rupert this evening," he said. "After all, as he is coming, we must do what we can to make him comfortable."

And then it was that Mary went to the garden-gate, and stood swinging her hat, as described in the first chapter.

Great was the excitement at Mr. Hawthorne's house that evening when it was time for the return of the dog-cart. Mrs. Meredith and Mary stood in the porch, peering down the street. Hugh, with both hands in his pockets, had taken up his position in the middle of the road. The cook and the housemaid fluttered uneasily about in the background, making preparations for the guest's entertainment. Tom, standing in the gateway, was of opinion that the travellers might not arrive for a quarter of an hour, "'cause master wouldn't hurry the old horse to-night—not he."

But even as he spoke Hugh called from the road that they were in sight, and a few moments afterwards the dog-cart drove up.

Before it stopped, one of its occupants half-scrambled, half-fell out, with a kind of joyous crowl, and bounded up the steps, crying—

"Here I am, cousin!"

Mary advanced, holding out both hands, and was at once, to her great astonishment, folded in a rapturous embrace, and kissed twice on each cheek.

One second later, Mrs. Meredith was treated in the same manner; and Hugh himself stood in some danger for a moment; but Rupert seemed to recollect himself at sight of the huge young farmer, and substituted a vigorous shake of the hand, in deference to insular prejudices.

A little below the average height, and rather slenderly built, wearing a slight moustache and close, curling brown hair, Rupert Gerard would have been handsome, if his face had ever attained sufficient repose to allow one to see it properly. But this it never did, except possibly when Rupert was asleep. It was always so charged with the emotion of the moment, whatever it might be, that, if one may be allowed to use the phrase, the features were hidden by the expression. There

was a distinctly foreign air about him, and about his clothes, and everything he did. His poor mother, as Mr. Hawthorne afterwards remarked with some bitterness, seemed to have counted for nothing, so far as he was concerned.

He had dropped his umbrella on the steps, and his hand-bag in the doorway, and now he stood holding Mary and Mrs. Meredith each by a hand, and pouring out a rapid and ceaseless stream of words.

"I am so glad I came. I never thought of it till this morning—I knew every step of the way—Long Drayton is scarcely altered at all. It is the most delightful place in the world—and Mary," here he turned to her with the most undisguised admiration—"Mary, whom I left a little small girl, is now—*ciao!*—the loveliest woman I have in my life ever seen!"

"Ah, I shall never forget the dear old times," he rattled on, turning to Mrs. Meredith; "how often we stole your apples and apricots, Mrs. Meredith, and what splendid games we used to have in your stackyard! I shall never be so happy again, if I live a thousand years—"

"Cousin Rupert, we shall have a crowd in the street if you don't come in, and let the door be shut," protested Mary, who was blushing suitably.

"What! a crowd at Long Drayton?" he exclaimed with a peal of laughter. "No, no: I am half a foreigner now, but I have not forgotten so much as to believe that."

He followed Mary into the drawing-room, however, Hugh going after them rather jealously; and Mr. Hawthorne, who was taking off his driving gloves, and hanging up his whip, was left for a moment in the hall with Mrs. Meredith.

"He's an outrageous fellow," he said in an awe-struck tone, "an outrageous fellow! He actually"—here his voice sank to a whisper—"he actually kissed me on Whittleham platform, and the station-master and one or two porters were looking on. I thought I should have sunk into the ground."

After supper there was much conversation about old times, Mary and Rupert keeping up a steady fire of questions, all beginning, "Do you remember?" Mrs. Meredith or Hugh now and then chiming in with a correction or an amplification, while Mr. Hawthorne beamed benevolently on the company through his spectacles, and wished he could decide whether it was not sinful for people to be so lively.

The stream of reminiscences was diverted suddenly by a chance reference to Paris, and Rupert was soon launched upon a full, true and particular account of his life there.

"But," said Mary, with a dazed look, after some speech of his, "have you really spoken to Victor Hugo?"

"Spoken to him?" repeated Rupert in surprise. "Oh, yes; he was a friend of father's. We used often to go and see him on Sunday."

"What place of worship does he attend?" asked Mr. Hawthorne, with an appearance of much interest.

Rupert looked at him blankly, but Mary came to the rescue.

"It seems absurd no doubt to you that I should be so surprised," she said, "but I have never seen any one who has written a book, and—and—well,

I should scarcely have been more astonished if you had spoken of taking tea with Shakespeare."

Rupert laughed, and seeing that the subject attracted his cousin, pursued it farther. He had talked to Meissonnier, he had met Leconte de Lisle and Dumas *filz*, he had shaken hands with Robert Browning, he knew Brown the historian, Robinson the art-critic, and Jones the famous Royal Academician. He did not brag of his acquaintance with these and other celebrities; he had been used to knowing them all his life, and there was nothing unusual about it in his eyes; but he was glad to be able to interest his pretty cousin.

To Mary it was like a dream, for in a secret, shamefaced way she took a living interest in literature and art. Her father thought it wicked; Hugh condemned it as silly; so she was obliged to keep it to herself as a rule, but it was there none the less.

She had read about these people; had seen their pictures; got their poems by heart; taken their sermonizing as the voice of Truth itself—it seemed impossible that her old playmate should have really talked to them even as she was talking to him now. There were no bounds to her curiosity about them: How did they dress? What did they talk about? Where did they live? Mr. Hawthorne and Mrs. Meredith went to sleep; Hugh fidgeted and yawned, but it made no difference.

When, at a very late hour for Long Drayton, the party broke up, and she was alone in her bedroom, she was too excited to sleep. Rupert's was life indeed! To work hard all day at a glorious art, to associate when his day's work was done with some of the best intellects in the world, to gain, at the age of twenty-three, "honourable mention" for a picture in the Paris Salon (for this also had come out in the course of conversation). "Ah me," thought Mary; "how different from boring one's-self to death at Long Drayton, and only learning from Mrs. Meredith how to manage a dairy—so that I may be a useful wife to Hugh!"

The thought of Hugh brought no comfort, but the reverse. He did look terribly slow, and heavy, and sleepy beside Rupert! And he was cross too, she could see that, because they had been talking all the time of things he knew nothing about. He was a large talker in his way, and did not like to be entirely set aside. But then his conversation was exclusively bucolic—bovine even. He was good-hearted, and kind, and so on, but she wished he had a little more animation and polish. In society, he always looked as uncomfortable as a dancing bear.

The summer dawn was creeping up the sky, and the early gossip of the birds in the garden made itself clearly heard through her open window before she went to sleep, after having a comfortable little cry. It was past seven o'clock when she awoke and looked out. The garden was bathed in sunshine, and drenched in dew; lines of gossamer hung from the branches, or floated free, twisted and tangled into curious knots.

Mary took a deep breath of the scented air, and then started back from the window with a stifled shriek.

After a while she reassured herself sufficiently to peer cautiously from behind the curtains, but what she saw seemed to fill her with dismay. She

hastened her toilet considerably, and flew downstairs, and out into the garden.

There sat Rupert on a camp-stool, before a travelling easel, sketching a small arbour covered with climbing roses and creepers, and singing blithely to himself as he worked.

"Cousin Rupert, you mustn't—you mustn't!" cried Mary, running towards him.

He was delighted to see her, and he would have kissed her again, but she was prepared for him now, and he had to be satisfied with her hand.

"You are late," he said; "I have been up nearly an hour, and almost finished my sketch."

"Oh, please put the things away," implored Mary; "pa would be so angry if he saw you."

"The deuce he would! What on earth for?" queried Rupert in great perplexity.

"Don't you know it's Sunday?" asked Mary; "or don't the people you live among make any difference for that?"

"Not the least," replied Rupert, getting his brushes and appliances together cheerfully; "but I don't mind—tell me what to do, and I'll do it. You had better give me some hints at once, or I shall be making some awkward mistakes I'm afraid."

"Well, you mustn't smoke in your bedroom," said Mary; "I smelt tobacco as I came by your door this morning, and pa is so nervous about fire. Besides, he hates smoking at all times."

"Very well, I won't smoke in my bedroom," he said. "Is there anything else?"

"Oh, yes; please, you must not say 'Mon Dieu' in English when you want to emphasize your remarks."

"It's not for emphasis exclusively," explained Rupert, "but I didn't know I had done it since I came here; are you sure?"

"You said it twice last night," replied Mary, "and I was very much afraid pa would notice it, but I don't think he heard."

They had by this time moved the sketching materials into the arbour. Rupert's face was rather clouded; life at Long Drayton promised to be more difficult than he had anticipated. But the cloud did not stay long; after all, he could go as soon as he found himself bored; and Mary was charming. So different from all the women he was accustomed to: creatures who painted pictures, or wrote books, or had theories about something, or set up for being solemn and learned, or witty and frivolous; in a word, who without exception posed in one way or another in order to make themselves conspicuous. And then she was different in another way too, being by far the most beautiful woman he had yet seen.

"You must let me paint your portrait before I go," he said; "I am not very good at portraits, but with a subject that nobody living could do justice to, I needn't mind failing."

"You must not pay extravagant compliments," said Mary with primness.

"Compliments!" he repeated vehemently, "that is no compliment, it is the truth. You are the most beautiful woman I ever saw, and I have seen most of the noted beauties."

"Hush—hush—you must not talk so," said Mary, blushing, "it does not do in English, and there is Jane coming to tell us breakfast is ready."

After breakfast, the horse was harnessed to a

tub-like vehicle called a "sociable" (Mr. Hawthorne considered a dog-cart improper on the Sabbath), and Mary, her father and the guest were driven over to Whittleham. Rupert, who had no suspicion of what was about to happen to him, was in high spirits, as most people would have been on so lovely a morning, and in so beautiful a country; but Mr. Hawthorne had on his Sunday face as well as his Sunday coat and hat, and the more Rupert laughed and joked, the more sombre he became. They rumbled into Whittleham, which was full at that hour of the faithful, wending their ways to their various places of worship. Rupert was much interested; the sight of the neatly-dressed old peasants, bowed nearly double by years of labour in the fields, very grave, very patient, very poor, affected him sensibly. He was silent for a little, and then remarked that he understood Millet's "Angelus" better now than he had done before, which observation fell flat, as nobody understood it.

The sociable was now brought to a stand opposite a very ugly brick building, into which a considerable stream of solemn broad-clothed men and responsible looking matrons, with their offspring, were entering. Before Rupert realized his position he was seated between his uncle and Mary in the chapel. He had been in no such place since he could remember, and for a time his curiosity was strong enough to keep him interested in what was going on; but the execrable taste displayed in the interior as well as the exterior of the edifice shocked him, the vileness of the singing made him feel ill, and the brainless, narrow-minded sermon completed his discomfort.

He was in a very bad temper when they stepped out again into the summer sunshine.

"What did you think of the sermon?" asked Mary, as they were driving home.

"It is the first I ever heard," replied Rupert, "so I am no judge, but I think the man who spoke it is an ignorant fellow."

Mr. Hawthorne turned gravely upon his nephew.

"Mr. Puplett is a Master of Arts," he said.

"I can't see that that is any excuse for him," remarked Rupert, "he is ignorant even for a Master of Arts. He said Voltaire and Tom Paine were atheists."

"So they were," said Mr. Hawthorne emphatically. "They were vile blasphemous atheists."

"They were not atheists at all," retorted Rupert, "as any one who has read their works knows."

"Thank God, I never have," said Mr. Hawthorne. "I have never been tempted in that way."

"Then," resumed Rupert, "he told the old exploded lie about Voltaire's death-bed. Hasn't the man read his Carlyle? Even ignorant Masters of Arts can do that."

"I think we had better drop the subject," said Mr. Hawthorne very stiffly, "it is not a profitable discussion for Sunday morning, and we are not likely to agree."

Rupert shrugged his shoulders in a quite Parisian style, and the rest of the journey was performed in almost unbroken silence.

Poor Mary felt dreadfully uncomfortable, and full of forebodings as to the future. If this sort

of thing were going on, Rupert's visit was likely to come to an abrupt conclusion; and she could not help confessing to herself that she did not want him to go. She decided that she would speak to him when they got home.

But, after assisting her to alight, Rupert vanished mysteriously, and to her great consternation he was not anywhere to be found when dinner was announced. They sat down in silence. Mr. Hawthorne had adopted an expression of countenance which he intended to represent mental suffering, but it only gave the impartial observer an idea of bad temper.

"I am afraid," said Mary, "that Rupert did not understand about dinner. I fancy he has gone for a walk."

Mr. Hawthorne shook his head, and heaved a deep sigh. "I fear he is a lost young man," he remarked, helping himself to more gravy.

"Nonsense, pa," exclaimed Mary, "he can't be lost, he will come back before long. And, pa, it is of no use that I can see to argue with him about religion. He has been brought up so differently, he doesn't understand our ways of looking at things. And he won't be here long."

"I trust not," replied Mr. Hawthorne fervently, "I trust not."

The long, hot, sleepy hours went by, and still there was no sign of Rupert. Mr. Hawthorne went to sleep with a handkerchief over his face, and a volume of sermons in his lap. Hugh came at about four o'clock, and Mary, who was now really anxious, relieved herself somewhat by quarrelling with him for his professed indifference, and did not allow so good an opportunity to escape to let fly a few barbed arrows of speech concerning his behaviour on the previous evening.

Hugh, who considered himself the injured party, adopted sulking tactics, and Mary then became extravagantly interested in a book. Five o'clock came, and Mr. Hawthorne awoke, and looked serious when he found his nephew had not returned.

Mary began to fear he had walked to Whittleham and taken the train for London, but at half-past five he rushed in, radiant, and joyous, and hot. He had had a splendid day in the fields, he said; he didn't know where he had been, but he had gathered a number of flowers, and got a wonderful appetite.

"But we have all been ever so anxious about you," said Mary; "why didn't you come in at two o'clock?"

"Oh, I didn't want any lunch," he replied, "I very seldom take any."

Mary was near crying with vexation. "It is my fault," she exclaimed, "all my fault. I quite forgot to tell you that we dine in the middle of the day here. Everybody does in this benighted village."

She was grieved to the depths of her housewifely soul; her voice was positively tragic. Rupert laughed heartily.

"Why, what does it matter?" he asked. "There is something to eat somewhere, I suppose, and that is the main thing. You must have thought me very rude; I shall have to apologize to uncle."

This he did with so much grace and tact that the old gentleman was mollified, and inclined to think he might have been hasty in his estimate of his nephew. And, as a matter of fact, I do

not think Rupert lost anything by his absence, for Mary went into the kitchen, although it was Sunday, and sent him up as nice a dinner as a man could want—for which, like a thick-headed male, he mentally thanked the cook.

In the evening, Mary, Rupert and Hugh went for a walk, and the cobbler's half-door was duly visited. But the house was empty, and old Bradley, his cobbling ended, slept in Long Drayton churchyard.

So the first day of Rupert's visit came to a close, and Mary tried to hope that the worst was over; but it did not seem probable.

CHAPTER III.

THE FLUTTERING.

It was arranged that Rupert should go farming with Hugh the next morning, and at five o'clock the latter drove up in a rough, ramshackle cart. Behind the seat, under a net to keep it from jumping out, was a large calf, which gave vent to its feelings from time to time in a melancholy "boo-o."

They drove first to an outlying farmstead called Filmer's, where the calf was safely deposited, and Hugh walked about for an hour, talking to his foreman, by which time Rupert, who had somehow got the idea that farming was a rollicking and romantic pastime, began to find it slow work, and to regret that he had brought no sketch-book nor anything to read.

From Filmer's they proceeded to Southam—another farm at some miles' distance—where Hugh assured his companion they were only going to stay five minutes; but there a horse was indisposed, and the foreman had not been able to induce the animal to take his physic. With Hugh's assistance this was achieved after a violent struggle lasting three-quarters of an hour; and then it appeared that one of the outbuildings had shown signs of a disposition to collapse, and this had to be looked at, and talked over in a leisurely way for half-an-hour. After that there was a haystack to examine, because it was "heating" too much, and a consultation took place as to whether a "chimney" should be cut in it for ventilation.

It seemed to Rupert that he would never escape from Southam; that this leisurely droning talk would go on for ever.

It was mid-day, and the sun was pouring fiercely down upon the wide, silent, empty champaign; a weight of ennui and sleepiness and depression pressed upon him; these leagues of emptiness and silence seemed horrible. Now, if Mary had been with him, he would not have minded it. This thought was at once followed by the reflection that if it were not for Mary he would return to London next morning at latest. And then, like a flash of lightning, an impulse of jealousy shot through his mind. Hugh seemed very attentive to her. Hugh might be a decent fellow enough in his way, but he was a mere animal, no more worthy of her than—Imagination failed altogether to supply an adequate simile.

The appearance of Hugh, striding along alone,

happily free from the ever-droning foreman at last, came as a blessed relief.

"I must just run over to Tilbrook," said Hugh as he came up. "We'll leave the cart here. It's not more than two miles across country. But perhaps you would rather stay where you are?"

Rupert replied that a short cut to perdition would be in his opinion preferable, and they started; but he was weary, and hungry, and disgusted. They had to climb fences, and jump ditches, and skirt cornfields; and Hugh strode along, talking all the while, whilst he was stumbling painfully in the rear, getting more out of breath every minute. At last they came to a much wider ditch than any they had crossed before. Rupert thought he saw a mischievous smile on the young farmer's face as they approached it.

"Can you manage this?" asked Hugh; "if not there's a plank a quarter of a mile farther down."

"Go on," said Rupert grimly.

Hugh drew back, took a short run, and cleared the ditch; Rupert tried to do the same, but only succeeded in jumping into the middle. As he struggled out, the air rang with Hugh's laughter, but the perfect good temper with which Rupert remarked—

"Ah, I was afraid I couldn't do it," made him feel ashamed of himself.

Rupert was now in a very unenviable condition, but there was nothing for it but to go on, and by the time they reached the hamlet of Tilbrook the sun had dried him passably well.

Hugh did his business, and they departed.

"We will go back the same way," said Rupert. "I am going to have another try at that ditch."

Hugh tried to dissuade him, but it was of no use; and this time, being fresher and on his mettle, he managed with a little difficulty to get over.

"You were always a plucky fellow," Hugh could not refrain from saying as they went on, and yet he felt he would much rather have remained silent; this vanquishment of the ditch marred his triumph greatly. He had been arranging a very comic story to tell Mary, but now it would not do.

And, as a matter of fact, when they reached home, the story, even as modified, was quite strangely unsuccessful. For nearly the first time in his knowledge of her, Mary was thoroughly angry.

"It was a mean, cowardly thing to do," she said hotly.

"What do you mean?" asked Hugh; "I did nothing."

"You went out of your way that it might happen," replied Mary; "the plank is in the direct path to Tilbrook. I know why you did it too. It is a piece of what you pride yourself upon as shrewdness, and what other people call mean trickery."

"You are in a passion," retorted Hugh, "this frog-eating fool seems to have turned your head."

He was sorry when he said it, of course, but it was too late; Mary cast upon him a look of the most unutterable contempt, and left him.

It was a bad quarrel, for they were both proud and sensitive, and both were deeply hurt. Mary's position, however, was the stronger, and she proceeded to take advantage of it. She paid redoubled attention to her cousin, and ignored Hugh's exist-

ence. This policy was an unfortunate one for Rupert, because it convinced him not only that he was in love with her, whereof he did not need much outward assurance, but also that his passion was reciprocated.

Hugh, for his part, was very soon worked into a perfect fever of jealousy, and he was the more enraged because he did not know that Rupert was ignorant of his engagement. For two days he left the cousins to themselves, and sulked, in the hope that Mary would make some sign of a desire for reconciliation. Hugh's experience of women had been very small!

Sulking having entirely failed, his imagination suggested no less crude a resource than Titanic rage. This was as great a mistake as he could have made, and makes it evident that, although he was cunning in a certain rough-and-ready style, he had not sufficient brain-power to be great even in cunning.

"I'll go and see what is going on," he said savagely to himself on the evening of the second day.

When he reached Mr. Hawthorne's house he paused in astonishment. The porch, the steps and the pavement in front of the door were crowded with the rough women who worked in the fields in "gangs." They made way for Hugh with great respect; they had all worked for him many times.

"What are all you gals waiting for?" asked he.

A chorus of shrieks arose in reply that made Hugh clap his hands to his ears.

"Sal Bloggs," he roared, "Sal Bloggs, come and tell me what it is. You others shut up!"

Miss Bloggs, a fat girl, with the huge combined bonnet and sunshade, the torn, weather-beaten garment looped up over a torn weather-beaten skirt, the huge boots, and too well-developed ankles of the "gang-girl," smirked a little, and then spake on this wise—

"A man as is stayin' at Muster Hawthorne's he guv 'lib Wadlow arf a sovereign for her old skirt and bonnet, to paint 'em in a picter, and me and these other gals want to sell him oorn."

"Have you seen anybody?" asked Hugh.

"Yes," was the chorus, "he's coming out directly."

And Hugh had not got to the top of the steps before the door opened, and Rupert appeared. He seemed highly amused, and not at all non-plussed.

"Ladies," he said in a loud voice, "I am very glad to see you all, but I regret to inform you that I have no need of any more of your clothing for the present; but you have all been very kind, and—there are twelve of you as near as I can count, and here are twelve shillings. Go and buy ribbons."

In two minutes the whole troop were scuttling off, laughing and screaming, down the street, perfectly satisfied with the turn affairs had taken.

Hugh left Rupert arranging with his visitors, and passed into the drawing-room, which he found empty. Making his way through the French window into the garden, he discovered Mr. Hawthorne, who was hard at work. He wore an old coat, plastered with the mud of years; the sleeves were turned up, and his hands and wrists were black with loam. He had "staved in" his hat against the branch of a tree, and the glasses of

his spectacles glistened with perspiration; a rake lay at his feet, in one hand he clutched a trowel.

"Ah, Hugh," he said in a melancholy voice, and then gave a convulsive start as the noise of the girls squabbling over the distribution of the shillings reached him. "What is he up to now?" he cried in desperation. "He is turning the house upside down, Hugh," he proceeded plaintively. "Last night he couldn't sleep, so he got up at three o'clock, and went for a walk. I heard him stumbling about the house, made sure it was a burglar, and took the blunderbuss to shoot him. When I aimed at him, he wasn't in the least alarmed, but shouted, 'Two to one you don't hit me, uncle;' but it might have cost him his life, Hugh. Such levity at a solemn moment like that is awful."

"I wish you had blown his head off," muttered Hugh under his breath. "Where shall I find Mary, sir?"

"In the arbour, in the arbour," said Mr. Hawthorne, with a despairing jerk of the trowel in that direction, "painting, or being painted, or something." And with these words the much-enduring old gentleman plunged once more elbow-deep into the soil.

Rupert's easel was placed in front of the arbour. Mary was sitting at the entrance in a carefully-arranged attitude, which apparently she had not dared to disturb, though Rupert must have been absent some little while. Hugh saw all this, and the iron entered his soul. He stalked up to the easel, looked at the sketch and gave a snort of contempt, looked at the sitter and laughed aloud sarcastically, and then turned upon his heel to find Rupert close behind him, watching these performances with amused interest.

"So sorry you don't like it," remarked the painter; "and the attitude doesn't suit you either? So very sorry!"

"No, it doesn't," retorted Hugh rudely. "Mary, I want to speak to you."

Rupert stared in astonishment at the tone in which this was spoken. Mary became crimson, but did not move.

Rupert looked from one to the other; then he said, "I should like to know what right you have to speak to my cousin in that way?"

"She knows what right I have, and that's enough for me," said Hugh, who was now in a towering passion.

"He thinks," explained Mary, who had grown white, "that he need not act like a gentleman nor speak like a gentleman to me because we have been 'engaged' for some little while. But that won't make any difference now, for I consider myself free from this moment."

"Free to marry your cousin, which is all you want," cried Hugh. "Why didn't you say so before, instead of waiting to pick a quarrel? I would have released you."

Rupert was stunned. An engagement, and he had known nothing of it! And now he was the cause of its being broken off! Hugh's insulting words aroused him.

"I am not accustomed to carry on quarrels in the presence of ladies," he said; "I will see you in a few minutes, Mr. Meredith. Mary, come into the house."

Hugh did not attempt to follow them; he waited till Rupert came back alone.

"Mr. Meredith," said Rupert, "I wish, first of

all, to assure you that I had no idea till a minute ago that there was any engagement between you and my cousin."

"I don't believe you," said Hugh.

Rupert bowed, taking this remark to be equivalent to a challenge.

"You may choose your own weapon," he said.

"My weapon will be a horsewhip," cried Hugh, white with rage.

"If you lay hands on me, I will kill you like a dog," said the other between his clenched teeth, putting one hand in the breast of his coat.

The two men stood glaring at each other like wild beasts. Hugh's strong, sluggish nature was thoroughly aroused at last; there was but one way to regain Mary, and that was by crushing this butterfly. He was strong enough to do it—he meant to do it; but it would not do to attempt it before he was sure of success.

"I will fight you in any way you like," he said; "but you are a fool to talk of a duel in England. We could get no seconds, and the survivor would probably be hanged. I mean to kill you, or to be killed myself; but we must think of a better plan than duelling."

Rupert was obliged to admit that there was a difficulty.

"If we were only in France it would be all easy enough," he muttered; and then for a few moments there was silence.

Rupert was thinking hard; Hugh, while pretending to do the same, was really watching him; for now was his hour and the power of darkness.

Suddenly Rupert exclaimed, "I have it!" with as much delight as if he had found something valuable.

Hugh looked at him rather unenially. He had no intention of running any personal risk at the hands of this harebrained fire-eater. He looked upon Rupert as a Frenchman, and he firmly believed an Englishman capable of fighting or outwitting any three Frenchmen ever born; but he did not propose to enter upon any contest which reduced these wholesome natural odds.

"I've been sleeping badly," said Rupert, "and so I have had a phial of chloral sent me from London. There is enough to kill anybody if it is all taken at once. We will draw lots for it; the loser shall drink it, and to-morrow one of us will be found to have died from an overdose, taken for sleeplessness, or toothache, or what you will. Do you agree?"

"Yes," replied Hugh at once, feeling much relieved. He reflected that even if he lost no absurd sense of honour would compel him to drink the chloral.

Rupert drew an old letter from his pocket and tore a piece of it into two equal-sized strips.

"I have no pencil," he said, handing them to Hugh. "Mark one of them with a cross, fold them both to the same size, and I will take one. If I get the marked one, I will drink the chloral; if I leave it, you must."

Hugh simply nodded; this arrangement simplified his task considerably. Without a moment's hesitation he marked *both* papers, folded, and held them out.

Rupert took one, and opened it.

"*Sacré!*" he hissed, throwing it away. "I have lost."

Hugh tore his paper into very small pieces, and

tossed them into the air. Then, without making any comment, he passed down the garden, said "Good-night" to Mr. Hawthorne, and entered the house. There was nobody in the drawing-room, but, curiously enough, Hugh, after looking round, went upstairs before leaving.

Rupert remained where Hugh left him. It was getting dusk, the garden had grown very silent, moths alone were stirring, and a solitary bat wheeling over his head. So it was all over in a moment, and the sun that had just set would never rise again for him. It was odd, but he could not realize it. He only felt stupid, and as if his vital energy had been frozen and paralyzed.

Then he heard a light step behind him, and, turning, found Mary. She had been crying, and her eyes were red. He stood looking at her without speaking, and the lines of the Persian poet rang in his ears—

When you and I behind the veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the world shall last,
Which of our coming and departure heeds
As the sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

"Why did you not tell me of your engagement?" he asked at last, and his voice seemed to himself to come from a great distance.

"I thought you knew of it at first," replied she; "and when I saw you didn't, oh, I tried to tell you ever so many times—but it was of no use."

"What happened after I left you?" she asked timidly, after a silence. "Did you quarrel?"

"Yes," answered he; "we had a few words, and parted not the best of friends. But you and he will make it all up when—I am gone."

"Never!" exclaimed Mary with great energy; "I don't think I ever felt towards him as one ought to feel towards the man one is going to marry. I am sure I never shall now."

Rupert looked at her steadily, and her eyes fell. She seemed more beautiful than ever, standing there in her light dress like a white shadow in the twilight. And looking up he rather felt than saw how intensely blue the sky was through the dusk, and the air was full of fragrant odours, and life seemed better worth having than it had ever done before.

Somehow he had taken one of her hands in his—somehow he had taken both—somehow his arm was folded about her waist—and their lips were growing dangerously close together—somehow—

"My God! it is too much," he cried passionately, and rushed into the house.

At eleven o'clock that night he drank his chloral to the last drop, and went to sleep instantly. And the short summer night waned, and the sun arose, and the birds awoke, and, at a little past four o'clock, Rupert also awoke from a placid slumber and looked about him.

For a moment he did not remember what had happened; then it struck him that he was probably dead, but the plain, prosaic bedpost in front of him seemed to negative this idea. Had all the wretchedness of the past evening been nothing more than a bad nightmare? No; there was the empty phial marked "Chloral," and he had drunk every drop; and yet he had not even a headache.

The stuff must have been very weak he concluded; and then rapidly he reviewed the situation as it stood altered by this unforeseen circumstance.

His resolution was taken in five minutes. He was bound in honour to be dead so far as Mary and Hugh were concerned, and he felt that he could never again face the latter after this fiasco. But he had fulfilled his part of the contract, it was not his fault that he was alive; he had done what he engaged to do, and he did not propose to do any more.

He would pack up and go before anybody was stirring. Hugh would think him a poltroon who had broken his word of honour, but he did not see how that could be helped; and after all, if he never crossed their paths again, he would at any rate have kept the spirit of his promise.

He bathed and dressed, and then began to hurl his belongings into his portmanteau; and in about an hour he stole very quietly downstairs, and made his way out into the street.

Hugh was standing in front of the house; he looked pale and haggard, as if he had been there all night. He advanced, and Rupert recoiled involuntarily; but the sudden joy and relief in the farmer's face at sight of him made him pause.

"I have not been able to sleep," said Hugh. "I must tell you everything. I cheated you over drawing the lots; then I went to your room, and poured half your chloral away, and filled the bottle with water, so that you should not be hurt. After that, I went home and felt proud of myself for a little while; but it didn't last, and I've been walking up and down here most of the night."

Rupert put down his portmanteau, and stared speechless at his interlocutor.

"I behaved like a blackguard," Hugh resumed; "there's no doubt about that. But I have been engaged to Mary for two years, and we were to have been married after harvest. It was pretty rough to see myself cut out in three days by somebody else, because—though I'm no hand at pretty speeches and so on—I'm very fond of her, and she was fond of me before you came and turned her head; as if you hadn't enough to choose from—as if such a marriage wouldn't separate her from all her friends—as if she, after the first novelty had worn off, wouldn't be shocked at your behaviour every minute of the day, and as if you wouldn't be sick of her in a week."

"You may spare your breath," said Rupert; "I unwittingly did you a great wrong. You have made it about even with me. We may dispense with apologies. Which is the way to Whittleham?"

"You are going?" asked Hugh, almost breathless with joy.

"Yes," said Rupert grimly; "under my father's will I cannot marry for a year. I won't interfere with you for that time. If you can regain her, do it; if not, I may pay you another visit."

And so, with no word more, nor any sign of farewell, he passed out of sight down the silent dusty street, and Long Drayton beheld him not again.

For Hugh and Mary were married after harvest, as had been arranged, and she has now a large family, and makes the best butter in the county. But Rupert is a confirmed bachelor.

A GAME OF CHANCE.

BY HORACE VICKARS REES.

Author of "At the Sign of the Silver Bells," &c.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. FROTHINGLEY REMONSTRATES.

SIX months in a man's life is a short span, but to Harvey Carroll these six months had appeared intolerably long and wretched. He had become more misanthropical than ever, and more and more weary of the profitless ignoble uses to which he applied his life. In his practice he was getting listless or impatient, the natural results of jaded mind and nerves, and his stock patients—for the most part idle ladies who took more interest in their doctor than in their ailments, the seeing of whom involved a mild distraction—were wondering what had happened to their favourite physician.

"My dear," said the Hon. Mrs. Topflyer to Mrs. William Broker, the banker's wife, "he actually told me yesterday to my face that there was nothing the matter with me! Just fancy, and with my nerves in that dreadful state that I cannot bear anything, I positively cannot. I shall really have to consult some specialist. I don't think Dr. Carroll understands my constitution—I really don't."

It may be readily imagined that when a man in want of guineas had descended to that state of imbecility which permitted him to bluntly tell an hysterical lady anxious for sympathy and prescriptions that there was nothing the matter with her, his mental calibre was becoming demoralized.

He had paid but few visits to Mrs. Frothingley's pleasant villa during these six months, and their duration had been equally brief.

He had found Eva sulky or malignant, and her companion Grace silent and preoccupied. He had avoided as far as possible any contact with the girl whom in his heart of hearts he knew that he loved with a great hopeless passion; he would not stray too far into alluring dangerous paths lest he should wander afar and lose sight of the resolve which shone like a great light before his mind.

For this man, who was one of those not infrequently met combinations of ignoble courses and lofty impulses, had shuddered at the thought of allying the life of a pure innocent girl to the misery of his. Looking upon himself with a despairing fatuity as a doomed man, a man whose life had been and was destined to be a dreary failure, he could not well persuade himself otherwise, and it seemed to him that in adhering to this resolve to keep the woman that he loved untainted by the breath of his passion, one solitary bright glow stood out untouched by the shadows that cumbered his life. He even found a solitary comfort in this repression of his inmost being; it seemed to tell him that some relic of his finer self remained to him unutilized by the iconoclasm of a ruthless world and its crushing sins. And it may be that this weak sinner—sinner by virtue of his weakness, which led him to barter his manhood's heritage for a mess of pottage—in the hours when this lofty chivalrous purpose pressed back the

tumultuous yearnings of his heart and crushed the multitudinous thoughts that arose in their train, drew nearer to that divine unfathomed ideal of man than the howling Pharisee who publishes his benevolence by loud-voiced cheques and demonstrates his reverence by his upturned eyes.

He had noticed that if by any unusual chance he was exchanging a word with Grace, Mrs. Frothingley, after two or three prodigal frowns, bore down upon them and abruptly monopolized his attention. The good lady's conduct was slightly inexplicable, for to Harvey she was the reverse of amiable.

"Why do you come here if only to torture me?" she asked him with great abruptness one evening.

"Torture you!" he echoed in genuine surprise.

"I thought we were excellent friends."

"Friends!" cried Eva, with a world of disdain in her voice. "Oh! the very best. What is the matter with you of late?" she went on fiercely. "You have grown as dull and morose as a South Sea savage. I am getting to hate the sight of you."

"Thanks," he rejoined, calmly. "I suppose I had better remain in my savage haunts and not trouble you with the sight of me?"

"Perhaps you had, if you wish," she answered. "Sit down, sir," she added a moment later with a little stamp of her foot, as Harvey rose in search of his hat, "how dare you!"

"I thought you told me to go," he said with provoking nonchalance.

"Nothing of the sort. Sit down. What do you mean by all this?"

"All what?" he inquired.

"All this brutal behaviour," she replied petulantly. "Your—your horrid tempers and sulky ways. I suppose you have been falling in love lately," she went on viciously, eyeing him keenly the while, "a grand, hopeless passion for some little wretch as poor as yourself and equally extravagant."

A dark shade passed over his face which did not wholly escape Eva Frothingley's vigilant eyes, but he answered her lightly enough, "I really don't think so, Eva. It may be, but upon my word I don't remember it just now. I'll think it over."

"You are a horrid bantering wretch!"

"Yes? Now I thought I was becomingly serious. Let us suppose that I had fallen in love with some little wretch, &c., &c. Does it concern you?"

There was a pause, and she seemed to be struggling with some inward emotion. Then she said in a low voice, "No, it does not concern me." But there was a light in the fierce sea-green eyes as she said it which caught his gaze as he looked up to her, and arrested the half smile on his lips, a gleam which haunted him long afterwards when he understood its meaning.

At this moment Grace entered the room and took up her work which lay on a side-table, while Mrs. Frothingley said with forced calmness—

"Have you seen your brother Frank lately?"

"No, I have not," replied Harvey. "Have you?"

"No."

There was a swift upward glance of surprise from Grace as Mrs. Frothingley uttered the monosyllable, but her eyes were immediately bent upon

her work again. Harvey, however, had noticed the look and was keen enough to speculate concerning it.

His mind flew back to those long-faded years when this woman had held him, a stripling, in thrall, and had soured his life by relentlessly flinging him aside for poor Frothingley and his money. He remembered dimly, as one remembers an old hurt, the pangs of his wounded heart; he had to look back through a decade of years, and time lent him a laugh for his folly now. But she was handsome enough still to captivate a young man's fancy, and she was devil enough, he thought, to wound poor Frank for her caprice as she had wounded him.

He made a mental note to look to it, and shortly afterwards took his leave, little dreaming of the fierce passionate storm that he left raging beneath the unruffled bosom of the woman who calmly and coldly laid her hand in his and said unmovedly "Good-bye."

CHAPTER IV.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

A CALM summer twilight, with the shadows stealing down amongst the silent trees, and the little world around breathing peace, a tall graceful girl with a white wrap over her shoulders, leaning pensively against the wicket gate at the end of Mrs. Frothingley's lawn. A picture pretty enough to cause a passing straggler to cast a furtive glance, and attractive enough to make even Harvey Carroll, wandering deep in thought down the leafy highway, to look up with a quick start.

"Why, Grace," he said recovering himself, "what on earth are you standing here for? You will catch cold, child."

The girl turned sharply round at the sound of the voice, and then seemed petrified at the sudden appearance of Harvey.

He opened the gate, entered, and took her hand. She was trembling violently.

"See, you have caught a chill, you are shivering," he said. "You must come in at once. Come, I will take you in."

With one swift movement she placed herself in front of him, and feverishly grasped the doctor's arm.

"No, no," she cried, in a strange frightened voice. "Not in there! You must not go into the house!"

"Why not?" he asked in huge surprise. "What is the matter?"

Grace made a violent effort to recover herself. Her composure had evidently been strangely affected by the sudden appearance of her companion, and it was only by a desperate effort of will that she steadied her voice and answered, "Nothing; there's nothing the matter, indeed, but Eva is very busy—engaged. Oh, doctor, you startled me so much."

"I am very sorry," he said, not quite satisfied, and peering at his companion through the twilight. "But Eva being occupied need not prevent us from going inside, for you certainly must not stand here any longer."

"Oh, doctor, do not go," said the girl pleadingly, her terror returning. "Indeed, indeed there is

nothing the matter; but—but—please do not go in!"

"Nonsense, my dear," he answered with a laugh. "We will walk here if you like, but you must put a hat or something on. Come, we will go and fetch it," and he took her arm in his and led her to the house. She seemed too terrified to resist, and permitted him to lead her along the gravel path.

Suddenly she stopped, and said, "Oh, this is dreadful! Eva will never forgive me, and it will make you wretched."

He stood and looked at the pale, blanched face of the girl in mute surprise.

They were near the house now, a short turn and they would be in front of the low French windows of the charming widow's drawing-room, illumined by the soft red light which suited Mrs. Frothingley's evening complexion so admirably.

By a common impulse their eyes had rested simultaneously upon the open windows of the room.

"What on earth is the matter, child? Who is in there?" he asked swiftly.

Grace put her hand to her side, as if in sudden pain.

"Who is it, Grace? tell me," he repeated.

"Your brother." She spoke the words in a low half-inaudible whisper.

"My brother! Impossible. He is in Devonshire."

"No, indeed. He is here. He has been here three times this week." All this she said in a hushed tone, as if fearful of giving him pain.

"With Eva Frothingley, eh? Ho, ho!" laughed Harvey grimly. "Is that the dear Eva's latest amusement? I had suspected it. Poor Frank!"

His companion looked at him wonderingly. She had evidently expected a more passionate outburst from the man at her side, and, although it would have been difficult for Grace to have assigned a cause, her poor trembling heart gave a great leap.

"I must see them," he said presently, with a short decisive gesture. And he took her hand and led her quietly and cautiously to the nearest window and peered in. The long low casement was wide open, and he could distinctly hear their voices. He felt a slight qualm at playing the part of eavesdropper, but his mind was too full of speculation concerning the probable meaning of this new attempt at distraction on the part of Mrs. Frothingley to trouble much concerning it. From their vantage ground Harvey and his companion had a good view of the pair inside.

The boy was sitting in a low chair at Eva's side, looking straight before him, and Eva, looking superbly handsome in ruby velvet and point lace, was airily smoking a tiny cigarette. Once or twice her delicate jewelled hand wandered caressingly over the curly head at her feet, as if its owner were a lap-dog or some other domestic pet, and she was engaged in soothing an unmeaning outburst on the part of the refractory animal.

It did not seem to have the desired effect, for the lad started up suddenly and faced Eva.

"Merciful Heavens!" gasped the doctor, as he caught sight of the blanched, anguish-stamped countenance of his brother. He had not seen Frank for two months, and the sight of him was a revelation. Grace felt the doctor's clasp tighten on her hand, and her woman's instinct told her

that his thoughts were with the boy and not with the false, cruel woman at his side, who seemed to be toying with him like a bird of prey. Through the open window came the sound of their voices to the amazed listeners outside, and the words that reached them struck one at least with a sickening heartache.

"Mrs. Frothingley, I am ruined."

The gay glittering woman gave a light laugh. "Nonsense, my dear boy, ruin is a very harsh word. And after all, you know, one is generally only ruined once in a lifetime."

The student looked at the cruel woman despairingly. She was puffing at her elegant cigarette very calmly, as though she were discussing the most trivial topic imaginable.

"Your friend Caverton is one scoundrel," said Frank, without further heeding her heartlessness; "and your friend the Hon. Jack Juggleby is another. The one has swindled me out of my inheritance, and the other has shared the proceeds."

"My dear Frank," said Eva Frothingley with charming remonstrance, "you must really be more guarded in your expressions. You are almost as horribly blunt as your dear brother Harvey. You really mustn't, you know."

A spasm passed over the lad's delicate face at the mention of his brother's name, and he leant against the mantelpiece despairingly.

"Harvey!" he moaned. "I dare not face him. Do you think I dare stand before him and tell him that I am a liar, a perjured wretch, that in a few days he and my father will have reason to curse me and shut me out of their minds? Not likely."

"I really do not see why there should be any fuss about it," said Eva calmly. "What are the facts? Listen to me. You develop a taste for horse-racing and betting?"

"Which you encouraged," interposed the wretched lad fiercely.

"Oh dear, no," she answered quietly. "I know nothing about such horrid, vulgar things. As I said, you develop a taste for horse-racing and betting. Well, that is no great crime. Your model brother has developed a similar weakness, I believe, and you become very intimate with Mr. Jack Juggleby, who introduces you to our mutual acquaintance, Captain Caverton."

"Captain Caverton!" exclaimed Frank, scornfully.

"Ready money being necessary to the indulgence of this expensive amusement of horse-betting, or whatever you call it," pursued the merciless Eva, "the captain engages to find £3,000 for you on the security of a nice little property which you possess in your own right, left you, I believe, by your dear mother."

The young man groaned audibly.

"The captain does find—I believe find is the correct city term—the £3,000 and, with the assistance of the Hon. Jack, who knows so much about the turf and those sort of things you know, you unfortunately get rid of the £3,000. Very unfortunate this, of course, particularly as mortgages are mortal, and the kind friend who lent you the money finds it necessary to call it in immediately for some pressing necessity, and talks about foreclosing according to the terms of his mortgage. And you think, of course, that Harvey and your dear father will be very distressed——"

"Stop, for Heaven's sake," said the miserable

lad. "Firgrove was my mother's own house. The happiest days of my parents' married life were spent within its walls. My father and Harvey look upon it as sacred. And now—now it is gone—gone to illustrate the folly of another fool. Mrs. Frothingley, can you not help me? Is there no hope of saving it?"

"Why don't you apply to Harvey?" she said, not answering his question directly.

"I cannot, I dare not. Besides, I do not suppose that he has three thousand shillings by him, not to speak of three thousand pounds."

"There is one way in which it might be managed, with Harvey's assistance," said Eva, measuredly, laying considerable emphasis on her last words.

"How is that? It is impossible—besides, I cannot tell him—I would leave the country sooner." The lad's habitual weakness of mind showed itself again and he hung his head despairingly.

"Pooh," said the collected woman before him, with a little touch of scorn. "I, at any rate, am not afraid of him. I will tell him."

Frank attempted a feeble protest, but Mrs. Frothingley stopped him and said:

"There now, that will do. I will endeavour to arrange it. Come and see me the day after tomorrow, and who knows—I may have the money and then that naughty boy will pay off his debt and never horse-race again."

She kissed the unhappy lad lightly on the forehead, and dismissed him with a gay smile and a delicate little tap of her fan, much as an interesting aunt might send off a favourite nephew, after indulging in a little playful remonstrance concerning the young gentleman's latest peccadilloes. And as the sound of the hall door closing upon the wretched youth reached the ears of the two watchers outside, their eyes witnessed a most extraordinary proceeding on the part of Eva Frothingley.

On a little side table, ensconced in an elegant plush frame there stood a portrait of Harvey Carroll, the man who was standing outside the window looking into the rich silent room, and clasping convulsively the hand of the trembling girl at his side.

They both knew the portrait well; it had always stood in the same position.

And looking still into the room they saw Eva Frothingley, who but one minute before had been laughing with seemingly the lightest of hearts, cross over with one quick step to the little console, seize the portrait in her hands and kiss it frantically again and again. And then she raised her grand arms above her head in a passion of ecstasy and exultation, as one might who had the whole world at her feet.

Instinctively Harvey Carroll drew his companion away from the window and walked to the dark shadow on the other side of the house. But the moon was out and shed its soft light full upon the faces of the awe-stricken pair. They could see into each other's eyes.

"Grace, my dear child, what, in Heaven's name, does all this mean?" he said, in a voice full of tumult and despair.

"Can you not see?" she answered, in a tone of intense pain. "Did you not see enough?"

Hot, unwilling tears were in her great eyes as

she upturned them in the light of the moon to his softened gaze. Strive as he might he could never wholly banish from his eyes, those infallible truth-tellers, some trace of the tender solicitude that ever shines from the eyes of men and women when they gaze upon the being they love.

Their minds had met in that long gaze, and with the eloquence of silence communed. Something seemed to lock their minds together in that ecstatic moment; they could not tear their glance asunder.

And suddenly a great, glad light illumined their faces, and with an ungovernable impulse, forgetful of his resolutions, forgetful even of himself, the perplexed, weary man opened his arms and clasped the yielding girl in a close embrace.

"My darling, my love!" he cried. "It is killing me. I can keep silence no longer. Speak to me, dear heart!"

But she answered him nought, save that she laid her dark head on his breast, and nestled close to him as might a dove that has found its resting place, after a toilsome flight.

But it was eloquence the most divine for him. He stooped and kissed her with gentle tenderness. And in this brief moment his heart had found unutterable rest. He loved and was beloved.

(To be continued.)

THE ENCHANTED VOYAGE.

COME, Fancy, away,
Let us boldly stray
From earth and the earth's dark story;
Let us dream that we float
In a fairy boat,
On an ocean of peace and glory:

We are leaving behind
On the sobbing wind,
All voices of sordid sorrow;
While before us the sign
Of a dawn divine
Smiles over some mystic morrow.

And the sign grows broad,
As the splendour of God
In His garden of Rapture shining,
And soft as the grace
Of a spirit's face
On the bosom of Love reclining.

'Till the sky and tide
By that radiance dyed
(Mid the beams of the sunrise slanted),
Stretch golden and vast,
With the Day-star glassed
In the glory of waves enchanted.

Down, down we gaze
On the ocean maze,
Undimmed by a cloud's forewarning;
Pierced through and through
Its awakening blue
By the arrowy gleams of Morning:—

So a crystal sphere
Is billowing clear,
Divorced from all stormy thunders,

And weirdly arise
On our dazzled eyes,
The hues of its unveiled wonders :—

Behold ! through the deeps,
With a charm like Sleep's,
When a magical Dream is Pilot,
Upwaving slow
From the gulfs below,
The curves of a lustrous Islet.

It breaks like a bud
On the tranquil flood
(Its bloom from no mortal plant is),
For it burgeons and glows
In the fair repose
Of the beautiful, lost Atlantis.

Can it be we have found
At the farthest bound
Of this region of untamed Fancy's,
That Island which teems
With Elysian dreams,
And the glamour of Greek romances.

Down sail and oar !
We have gained the shore,
And are clasped by the stainless reaches
Of inlets uprolled
With their foam of gold,
On the borders of snow-white beaches.

Oh, rapture ! to list,
Through the purpling mist,
Rare music in secret places !
Oh, rapture ! to mark,
Through the foliaged dark,
Sky flashes of star-soft faces.

Farewell to the dearth
Of the dismal earth,—
Hot passions, and hopes that languish !
Farewell to its hates,
And its mournful fates,
Brief joyance and lasting anguish !

In this realm of the Blest
We shall take our rest—
Fair Fancy and I, together ;
In the lap of its love,
With the glory above
Of the true Arcadian weather.

If the far faint knell
Of a funeral bell
Be hither borne sadly ringing,
It is changed ere long
To the Orphean song
That the unseen Sylphs are singing.

If sometimes the tone
Of a mortal moan
Comes hither forlornly tragic,
It is lost as it floats
In the mystic notes
Of a music of matchless magic !

Let me dream I have passed
From the world at last,
Crossed even the Sombre River ;
That the cankering flame
Of life's sin and shame
Can torture no more—forever.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

SCOTCH UNIVERSITY LIFE.

BY J. M. BARRIE.

THE typical Scotch student has been frequently sketched as an interesting but alarming compound of red hair, theology, bad manners, potatoes, red herring, and the bag-pipes. It is then with a natural diffidence that the present writer has to admit that during his course of study at Edinburgh University, he does not remember once hearing the national music discoursed by an undergraduate, and that the only red-headed student of his acquaintance was an Englishman from the neighbourhood of the Thames. If only as a novelty, it may be worth while to spend a few minutes over the subject of Scotch University life with a writer who does not find it necessary to draw upon his imagination for his facts.

To Sir Alexander Grant's trustworthy though disappointingly tawdry "Story of the University of Edinburgh," readers may be advised to turn, who care to learn how the most celebrated of the Scotch Universities gradually acquired its present form, and how, with the ages, it grew from small things into one of the largest and most honoured seats of learning in the world. The attendance during the past session was not much under 3,500, numbers that have never been approached by any other University in the United Kingdom. The recent tercentenary celebrations of Edinburgh University were the first intimation to many persons that "oure tounis colledge" was the youngest of the Scotch seats of learning. Less, for this reason, than in any of the others, is French influence to be traced in its formation and mode of government. Only of late years have its students obtained the privilege of electing a Lord Rector every three years—this is almost invariably spoken of by the English Press as an annual occurrence—but the historically interesting election by a majority of *nations*, and not of students, is only witnessed at Aberdeen and Glasgow. The first of these has adhered to its French names and customs with curious tenacity. It has not even yet altogether surrendered the term *Lauration* in favour of the more modern Graduation ; its first year's students are familiarly known as *Bejeants*, just as their brothers of Paris used to be *Bejaunes*—from *bec jaune*, i.e. yellow nib, implying that freshmen are in an unfledged condition—and the Censors, Deans, Bursars, with other names, are all of French origin, though their signification has inevitably changed with the times. If this were an historical article, it would not be difficult to demonstrate that a few hundred years ago the student hardly swaggered through the streets of Paris, insulting and molesting the lieges, and acknowledging no authority but that of his *Alma Mater*, more impudently and defiantly than did his riotous namesake in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The academic and civic authorities were themselves at daggers drawn, the former claiming the right to try undergraduates for civic offences, while the magistrates were never happy when they eschewed academic affairs. The tug of war came when, as occasionally happened, a student posed as a cut-throat. The rival bodies were indifferent to his fate, but each claimed the painful privilege of trying him. The list of weapons prohibited by the laws of King's College, Aberdeen,

reminded the late Hill Burton of Strada's account of the armature of the Spanish Armada, and, indeed, as given in the *Fasti Aberdonenses*, it is sufficiently formidable: "*Gladios pugiones sicas machaeras rhomphaeas acinaces fustes, praesertim ei praeferrati vel plumbati sint, verusta missilia tela scolopos tormenta bombardas balistas, ac arma ulla bellica nemo discipulus gestato.*" The need for such regulations has, of course, long passed away, though it is not many decades since the academic and civic authorities of Edinburgh came to the conclusion that they could best live together in unity by ceasing to poach on each other's preserves.

The Scotch universities are cosmopolitan in the best meaning of the word, every kind of learning they do not pretend to teach, but their doors, their bursaries, their scholarships, and their fellowships are open to students of all nations. No greater mistake could be made than to look upon them as merely local educational institutions, fitted to the wants of the Scotch people. They offer their advantages to all students, rich or poor, be they Scotch, or Chinese, or German, or Tasmanian; and every year sees many hundreds of English students, and scores of students from half the countries in the world, flocking to their class-rooms. In some cases, it is true, the bursaries are limited to scholars of a certain name or locality, but these have always been scorned by the cleverer competitors, and their number is not increasing. Legend speaks of a bursary that went to the competitor who could farthest fling the heavy hammer; but either it has lapsed, or, like many other eccentric bursaries, has happily found its way into the open competition. These entrance bursaries range in value from over £30 a year to £5 a year, and are usually tenable for three or four sessions. The majority are carried off by the duxes of provincial schools, though at not very rare intervals a weaver from Forfarshire or a Dumfriesshire ploughman walks away from all competitors. An uncouth, raw, lumbering clown he often is in appearance; but think of the midnight oil he has burned after a day of hard labour in the furrows, the self-sacrifice entailed by the purchase of books, the patient grind, grind, grind, without perhaps even the assistance of the village schoolmaster, and the years of disappointment that have preceded his success. Without a bursary there can be no "college education" for him, and without such education his mother will never see him "wagging his head in a poo'pit"—the legitimate ambition of all Scotch mothers. He may have trudged on foot from his distant home among the hills to the bursary competition, failed to attain the necessary number of marks, and have trudged back again for a dozen years before he reaps the reward of his dogged perseverance. Does he more deserve to be ridiculed for his want of manners, or to have a star called after him for his pluck? One of my own fellow-students was frequently to be met with running along the streets like an athlete possessed. We learned the reason why, on discovering that he subsisted on the proceeds of a small shop, fearful when attending to his "business" that he would be late for college, and dreading, when at his classes, that he might be missing a customer. That was why he ran so swiftly to and fro. Another unhealthy-looking youth, lanky and

lean, always marched smartly along the class-room passages to his seat, holding his books out before him. He had been a waiter, and still pursued his old occupation during the vacation. God only knows how some of these men contrived to keep body and soul together. Some of them failed; and I have a vivid recollection of one who was driven by hunger one fine winter morning, to walk into the street through his window. As he was domiciled some half-dozen flats high, that was the end of him. Another died of a good meal. This is the melancholy side of Scotch University life; but it is less conspicuous than it was, bursaries and private teaching being now more easily obtainable, while no one is in himself a more complete refutation of the argument that misery and poverty are convertible, terms than the Scotch student. He manages not only to "keep his damned misery to himself," but to stifle it; in other words, he works too hard to have time to be unhappy. In his way he is a conscientious animal, too, tremendous on the ontology of being, accustomed to teach in Sunday-schools as well as to play his part in students' riots, and given to waiting patiently, or impatiently, on Sunday night until twelve o'clock before he begins his secular studies. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that he does not live in college, but in private lodgings. He seldom has a whole sitting-room and bedroom in one to himself. That would cost from half-a-crown to thirty shillings a week. A model apartment, sixty or eighty feet above the level of the street, ten feet square, with a rickety table, a concealed bed, a sofa that falls to pieces when pulled away from the wall, and a few chairs, is generally shared by two or more. I have known three who herded together in this fashion, happy as kings, though the bed was too small to hold more than two at a time. It was consequently found convenient for one to work while the others slept, and *vice versa*. They are all well-known professional men now, earning something like £1000 a year a-piece. One of my contemporaries was an extraordinarily haughty-looking youth, with *Vers de Vers* plainly stamped on his classic features. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays he gormandized on a twopenny pie—it was a spectacle never to be forgotten to see him haughtily ordering it—and during the remainder of the week he did not dine at all. Perhaps he was not hungry. I have watched his aristocratic fingers sewing buttons on to a shirt, and have little doubt that he cut his own hair.

Though the exceptions are not few, the wealthier among the students at the Scotch universities are usually studying for the medical degree. Not fifty per cent. of these are Scotch. This entails attendance during eight or nine sessions, i.e. to say, for over four years, and means an expenditure considerably exceeding £100 in fees alone. Four, or where an entrance examination is passed, three winter sessions must be passed at the University before the student can graduate in arts; but the fees here are under £40. A divinity course, or a legal course for graduates in arts who wish to enter for the LL.B. or Advocate's degree, extends over another three years, with big gaps, however, by way of vacation; while the rank and file, who have to attend a couple of legal classes and pass certain examinations before they can practise for themselves, are as a rule in offices,

and hardly merit the name of students. The characteristically Scotch undergraduate is the plodding member of the arts classes who looks forward to being a minister or a "dominie," and it is with him that this paper more particularly concerns itself. I noticed in the *Times* the other day, an appreciative review of a new book by an author who, as I happen to know, kept himself during the five or six months of a northern university winter session on £12. Some of this money must have gone in the purchase of books. His college days, however, have been long over, and nowadays the poor student can without much difficulty add to his income by private teaching. This is his salvation to-day, and it accounts for the fact that he is deserting the University of St. Andrew's for the larger towns, twenty tutors being required in Edinburgh, for instance, for one in the not less romantic city on the coast of Fife.

Not long ago the question of the comparative prosperity and worth of the different universities gave rise to a disagreeable altercation between two dignitaries high in authority in their respective universities. Professor Ramsay—not "Antiquities" Ramsay—of Glasgow held that though the classes of his college were perhaps overgrown, it was a good thing for vast numbers of young men to be pitted against each other, as it put them more on their metal than if they were the size of a class at school. It showed them the difference between school and college. To this Principal Tulloch of St. Andrew's, where the classes are certainly limited in size, retorted that the fewer the students the better could they be attended to, and added that the Glasgow students were not young men, but "lads." This last was the unkindest cut of all; the principal was challenged to define his terms, which he did at great length, and a wordy duel ensued in the newspapers, without any particular result.

The experience of all Scotch students will tell them that if "lads" are schoolboys, then there are a vast number of lads at college who would be doing better work at school; though no doubt we cannot be far wrong if we put the average entrance age at eighteen. The balance is preserved by men of thirty, forty, and even fifty matriculating along with boys of fifteen. I sat, for instance, for a period between a bearded man of certainly over thirty, and a mere child who could not long have entered his teens. The effect of University life upon the two was curiously different. The man it brought back to childhood, making him snack his fingers and hold out his hand when he knew the answer to a question; while it transformed the boy into a man before his time. The elder, rather a dullard, whom I often met in the streets with his wife and children, worked like a slave; the junior, who had been the pride of his teacher, soon gave up working altogether. I once took the liberty of examining the latter's note-book, and found that the only thing which had struck him as worthy of being recorded at a Natural Philosophy lecture was: "You hit the cork and it tumbles to the bottom." Among the other curiosities of my year were a father and son in the same classes.

A popular novelist, who referred in the same article to Sunday as the seventh day of the week, remarked recently in one of the magazines that among the many peculiarities of the Scotch people,

not the least noticeable is their veneration for the word professor. In those days when we have professors of ventriloquism, the concertina, and performing dogs, the title may be a little antiquated, but in the country north of the Tweed, it has not yet been vulgarized, and means too much to be despised. In classes ranging in size from 150 to over 400 students—there are others less popular, such as the one in which a student a few years ago clearly proved to his professor that as he (the student) was to be absent on the morrow, the class could not possibly meet because there would be no attendance—the relations between undergraduate and professor are necessarily distant, yet what can be done by the latter is done, and in many cases the student leaves college as fond of his grey-haired monitor as of a mistress. No undergraduate who ever spent a forenoon with the late Professor Hodgson, for instance, is likely to forget the occasion, and ex-Professor Blackie's breakfasts—shall we, alas! know them no more for ever, with their Gaelic songs, and impassioned oratory and tureenfuls of eggs!—were things to live for. If another academic dignitary was given to accommodating scores of students with only dozens of chairs, that did not seriously interfere with their enjoyment; and that other professor may now be forgiven—after the lapse of years—who invited his students to meet young ladies communicative and inquisitive with regard to Immaterialism and the Differential Calculus. One allowed his guests three glasses of whisky-toddy—may he live long and prosper. Another drew the line at lemonade and coffee—peace be with him. An absurd cry was recently raised in some parts of the north country against the electoral body for appointing an Englishman to a vacant Scotch chair, where several distinguished Scotch scholars were among the applicants. As if England could be expected to open her many doors to her northern neighbours if they flung theirs in her face. There is, of course, on the other hand, a certain risk in appointing brilliant English students who may have no sympathy with the rude but hard-working men whom they are expected to mould, though this danger has been exaggerated rather than minimized. Among the best and most esteemed professors in Scotland just now are English scholars. An amusing incident comes to my recollection in connection with this part of the subject. A professor, irritated to find that his students had got into the habit of placing their hats and canes on his desk—cloak-rooms being at a premium—announced that the next article of the kind placed there would be destroyed. For some days all went well, until the Professor was called for a moment from the classroom. A student slipped into his retiring-room, and emerged with the professorial hat which he placed conspicuously on the desk, while his fellows grinned and trembled. The professor on returning saw the hat, thought some rashly obstinate student had been delivered into his hands, and taking out his knife cut the offending thing to pieces, the while vainly attempting to conceal the smile of triumph that played about his countenance. If I mistake not, he was in a very bad temper the next day.

The Scotch student's recreation is characteristic. He plays as hard as he works. As at the English universities, there are cricket, football, and

boating clubs to join, but on the whole they are patronized by a limited and little-admired class of undergraduates. The man who is swift to follow the bounding ball, but slow at conic sections, is not a hero in the North as he is at Oxford or Cambridge, and to be a student and an athlete in one seems to the Scotch mind like trying to serve God and Mammon. Though instructed from his earliest years to look upon "play acting" as devil's work, he is generally an enthusiast in things theatrical—though too hard a worker to be a critic—and may be seen on Saturday nights congregated in the gallery in great force, and making demonstrations at inappropriate moments. He can (of course) discuss candidly the private life of world-renowned tragedians, and knows precisely the ages of popular actresses, with many interesting statistics as to the number of their husbands, and the way they dye their hair. He is, as a rule, great in debate, and the debating societies where Greek meets Greek over the policy of the Government, or the comparative merits of a black cap or a red cap to be hanged in, are as noisy as is consistent with scholastic dignity. They are held weekly on different evenings in the classrooms of the universities, but there are too many of them. If each student did not thirst after office, or if the professors of Humanity would more frequently set the story of the bundle of sticks as a Latin exercise, they would combine their forces, and materially increase their worth. Once a year the associated societies grapple with each other in deadly conflict, when new theories of the universe are propounded at eight o'clock precisely—doors open at half-past seven—and a few hundred students hold the character of Mary Queen of Scots in the palm of their hands. I remember hearing of a member of a Gaelic Society who dismissed Burns after this manner. "I pelieve ta works of Burns to haf an immoral tendency; I haf not read them myself, but such is my opeenion." These debating societies serve their most useful purpose in drawing students together, a social side to Scotch University life being otherwise sadly slighted. Of clubs, in the usual acceptation of the term, the student knows almost nothing, and the classes are so large that men might sit together for a decade without exchanging civilities. As it is, they are clannish beyond belief, the students of one county, for instance, loving to congregate in a single street, to keep together in the classes, to share each others amusements, and to meet at a debating society of their own. These sets have their signals, which are open sesames to the doors (and windows) of their members, and they are frequently heard in popular students' streets about the witching hour of night, when wild orgies begin that last until the break of day. The last to leave takes in the morning milk. Cards and academic discussion—which includes many things unknown to the vulgar—pass the time, smoking is not honoured in the breach, the entertainer can usually provide his guests with whisky—though they display forethought when they bring their own toddy ladles—and songs are heralded with unnecessary acclamation. When the fun grows fast and furious, the furniture suffers, the landlady, in deshabelle, expostulates, and the neighbourhood groans in its bed. The favourite songs are scholastic in their application, and some of them are suffi-

ciently doleful. The following is generally stopped with an antimacassar or a mantel-piece ornament :

I am plucked, I do admit it, I am spun, my
mother dear ;
Yet do not grieve for that which happens every
year ;
The profs, they have spite at me, I may have
long to wait :
But you've another son, mother, and he will gra-
duate.

In the small hours, after a generous allowance of toddy, this sometimes affects to tears :

With bones and skulls beside him,
With eyelids heavy and red,
The student sits in his lonely digs,
With a wet towel round his head.

The proceedings terminate with the singing of the National Anthem :

One bed among four of us,
Heaven send no more of us !
God save the Queen.

A notion prevails in some quarters that the Scotch student's existence is one series of rectorial elections, long drawn out. As well maintain that the road along which the traveller passes is lined with milestones. More excusable, though not less erroneous, is the impression that the vast majority of the students take an active share in the selection of candidates for the rectorship. Small political organizations, composed for the most part of the plucked and the athletic, take this duty upon them, call public meetings of the students, who attend in inconsiderable numbers, to approve their choice; write to the eminent man or the nobleman selected, acquainting him with the honour they propose to confer upon him; and the thing is done. The election takes place soon after the classes reassemble for the winter session, and as the eventful Saturdays draw nigh the whole body of the students are drawn into the arena, with exciting and often dire results. First year's men, the footballs of their fellow-students on ordinary occasions, are greeted in the friendliest manner by the most tremendous personages; and divinity students imperil their immortal souls to catch a vote. The notice-boards of the Universities—one of them recently bore the curious intimation, "Found, a gold-headed pencil case; if not claimed within three days, will be sold to defray expenses"—are utilized by the different committees for party purposes. Cartoons representing or misrepresenting the candidates are displayed, or given away at a merely nominal charge, and old jokes, resuscitated and redressed, are exhibited before an admiring public that scarcely recognizes them as corpses. The quadrangle on the morning of the polling-day is a scene of wild excitement. Thousands of undergraduates are there assembled, announcing that Mr. Gladstone is the greatest statesman of any age; that Mr. Gladstone is a babbler and a charlatan; that, as students have nothing to do with politics, the literary candidate should be elected; that there is nothing—not even leather—like politics; falling upon and smiting each other hip and thigh, and defying death and the Senatus in heroic attempts to climb statues, and tie party ribbons round their necks, while a score of cannibals fasten upon their

legs. Peas, rotten eggs, and other missiles fly so thick, that the quadrangle at times seems enveloped in a Scotch mist, and only the cry that the poll is about to be declared ensures silence. In the evening a torchlight procession takes place, when the defeated mingle with the victors; enmities of an hour—it may even be of a fortnight—are made up as the strange procession winds along the torch-lit streets; battles are refought over the inevitable pipe and toddy, and all is peace, friendship, and good-will when cock-crow sends the electors to their couches.

The arts student, before he takes his degree of M.A., must pass satisfactory examinations in Latin, Greek, Logic and Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Rhetoric and English Literature. An exceptionally good paper in one subject does not atone for any deficiency in another, and hence specialists do not always graduate. No statistics are afforded to show what the percentage of passes exactly is, but my own experience and that of others suggests that neither in the medical nor the art classes does it exceed forty per cent. It may be well again to emphasize the fact that all the students at the Scotch Universities are not poor and needy, and rough and studious. Some of them pay more every week for their sumptuous apartments than Carlyle, in his college days at Edinburgh, spent in a couple of months. As a rule they get plucked and plucked for their degrees until they tire of the monotony, and Providence at last finds them a sphere of action somewhere in the region of Manitoba.

THE POET'S FUNERAL.

"*WHO is dead? pr'ythee tell me!*"
 "A poet," wails the laurel-tree:
 "In this lone wood where thou dost see
 Violets from the green grass peep,
 He in this silent spot would sleep!"

"*Who will dig the poet's grave?*"
 "I," spake the mole; "I knew him well:
 In verdant woods and mossy dell,
 Where streamlets glide through meadows green,
 We met a hundred times, I ween!"

"*Who will bear him to his rest?*"
 "Hastening hither through the air,
 The poet's corse belov'd to bear,
 In frock-coats black and waistcoats white,
 A thousand swallows wing their flight!"

"*Who will chant the poet's dirge?*"
 "Hark to the plaintive nightingale,
 Sad Echo doth prolong the wail
 Which through the air floats mournfully—
 The wild notes of that threnody!"

"*Who o'er him will make a speech?*"
 "I can harangue," the stork did say;
 "For once in Persia, far away,
 I learnt the art: elegies sweet
 Of love and wine I will repeat!"

"*Who will now his mourners be?*"
 "We," say the larks in carols clear;
 "We will accompany his bier,
 For like all poets we too sing
 The thousand charms of nascent spring!"

"*Who will toll the poet's knell?*"
 "Now, slowly from the lily's bell,
 Tolls forth a solemn rhythmic knell,
 Announcing, with its mournful sound,
 A poet's heart lies 'neath the mound!"

The funeral, too, would attend
 Bright meteors which earthwards wend,
 And from their eyes, erstwhile so clear,
 Weep dewy tears upon his bier!

*From the German of Berger,
 by BARONESS SWIFT.*

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,
 Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART II.—continued.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE KATIE.

IT was the afternoon of the funeral day. Agnes Dilworth had been laid in that grave where she had longed to rest when death seemed near her on the island. Her husband had stood in the familiar place, while the sun shone, and not far off the river ran with the murmurous sound she had loved and remembered.

Her little part in life's tragedy was over. Somehow she had failed to make the best of it for herself and for others. Perhaps she had never had a fair chance; the opportunity of happiness offered to her was on a scale beyond her comprehension, on a level outside her reach. At any rate, she had never grasped it; and now, in the bright world where she had desired so much to be always comfortable, nothing was left of her but a melancholy memory.

And of Henry Dilworth's marriage nothing was left but disappointment and a wounded heart—except, indeed, a little child. His wife's love had failed him, his home had remained a lonely place, the rights of his position had been denied to him, and of all the hopes of the past nothing was left to him: he must return to the solitary uncared-for life he had led so long.

But there was little Katie. His power over her was absolute, his right in her complete. It might be, indeed, that a new blossom of affection was destined to flower where the tree of love had been broken abruptly off near the roots, and that this young life, so ignorant of evil, so innocent of prejudice, might atone for the disappointment of the past, and be a solace and a satisfaction to Henry Dilworth's later life.

Miss Leake had thought of the child often during the past week; her trouble for her sister's death was mingled with anxiety for her niece's

future. The death of Agnes seemed to have destroyed her own right to little Katie, yet she could not endure the thought of giving her up to her father.

The consciousness of her own weak claim made her less than just to Henry Dilworth; she felt that his coming had already brought trouble, and that absence was the only quality she could tolerate in him. She could not reproach him for his return to his wife, after so many years of absence, though she felt that the shock of his arrival—joyful as it evidently was—had hastened her sister's end. On the other hand, she made no apology for having left him in ignorance of his wife's increasing illness; for she had been herself unaware of its seriousness. Agnes was always ailing, always weakly, and many false alarms had lulled her sisters to a false security. Miss Leake fancied, from the sombre silence of Henry Dilworth, that he was inclined to blame her—unjustly, as she considered. But in this she was mistaken.

He blamed no one—not Agnes, nor her friends, nor himself. If their love had not been strong enough to nullify outward influences, he could not be angry at those influences for existing.

It was true that among the possible drawbacks of his marriage with Agnes he had not thought of her desertion, nor of her family's polite, but most intolerable, tolerance of him. He had looked forward to vexations for which their love would be a compensation, troubles which their mutual confidence would help them to face; but he had not imagined his wife slipping out of the situation, and leaving him in a position where he had some of the duties, but none of the privileges, of a husband.

Nevertheless, he had accepted this unthought-of development also with silence. It was impossible for him to make demands, to act with selfishness. He had not begun the connection on this footing, and he could not nullify his own generous desire by putting forward as an obnoxious claim what he had regarded only as a reasonable hope.

And now all chance of a reunion with his wife and of a happy married life was over; but there yet remained to him his little child, and half of her nature was his own.

He had hardly seen her during the days before the funeral. When that event was over, when the blinds were drawn up again, and Miss Leake put away her handkerchief with a feeling that the past had had its share for the moment, and that the future must be faced, Henry Dilworth asked that his child might be brought to him.

She came, carefully dressed in her new black frock, with a serious face and large eyes fixed in infantine resolve. She had heard many strange things in the last few days, and had meditated on them in childish fashion. No one had asked her opinion of recent events, but she had formed a decided one. The coming of the big man had brought trouble; her pretty mamma had died—all through that coming, the nurse said—and now nurse said also that the big man would take her away with him to a dreadful country—"poor little dear!"

She was resolved not to go—at any rate if tears, insolence and kicks could keep her at home—and she was prepared to act accordingly. She knew now that the big man was no impostor—as

she had been at first inclined to regard him—but her actual father; that made no difference, however. Her aunt had never wanted him to come, so nurse said, and *she* didn't want him either; her pretty mamma had refused to go to the dreadful country with him, so nurse said also, and *she* wouldn't go either.

All these interesting family disclosures had not been made by the nurse directly to the child, but to a fellow-servant; and the child had been supposed not to understand, or to forget immediately—as children are always supposed to do until they are old enough actually to join in the conversation, and prove their intelligent comprehension.

So little Katie Dilworth walked in that afternoon, very innocent in appearance, but really a small explosive primed to go off at the right moment.

Henry Dilworth's gloomy look brightened, and his heart softened at the sight of the child.

"Come to me, little one," he said, putting out his hands encouragingly, "and let us get to know each other."

She went forward obediently, with a side glance at Aunt Susie, whose presence she would have preferred to dispense with. She was not afraid of the "big man;" she had her mother's instinct of confidence in the right people; only she didn't like him, and intended to tell him to go away. Surely he would be as easy to deal with as the impertinent plumber.

He lifted her on his knees, where she sat with prim stiffness, and he said to her gently—

"Give me a kiss, Katie."

She looked at him for a moment sidelong, as if to see how he might be expected to take her reply; then she answered in a little voice of decision—

"Thank you; I don't want to. I don't like you."

A flush of painful surprise passed over her father's face; Miss Leake rose with a protesting "Katie," but Henry Dilworth glanced at her with a look which made her sit down again in silence. She saw that he could endure no interference at the moment.

"Why don't you like me, Katie?" he asked quietly.

She glanced at him again, to see how far his quietness might be trusted, and decided that he would be *quite* as easy to deal with as the plumber.

"You are not—nice." Here her childish eyes wandered over him observantly, trying to find a reason. He was not badly dressed, like the plumber, certainly, but reasons were not wanting: "You are—rough. *Regardez donc vos mains*. Your *hands*, you know," as she saw him look perplexed. Then, with a little air of successful impertinence, "If he's my papa, why can't he speak French, Aunt Susy?"

There was a moment's silence. Henry Dilworth put the child on the ground, and rose to his feet.

"Miss Leake," he said, not without dignity, "Is this the way you are training my daughter to love me?"

Miss Leake felt that he had the advantage. She was in the wrong, at least her side was in the wrong, obviously, unjustly, vulgarly even. She began to apologize.

"I cannot understand it. I never heard the child speak so. She has been left so much to the servants for the last few days—unavoidably. That must be the reason."

"And this is the result of your servants' opinion of me?"

It was Miss Leake's turn to flush painfully.

"I cannot tell. I have no reason to think so. Katie," she said sharply, glad to escape from her embarrassment by reproving the child, "go to your father at once, and tell him that you are sorry."

"No, no, no," said Henry Dilworth softly, "she must not be scolded into love of me."

"She must be made to do what is right. Katie, come here. I am ashamed of you."

But the child stood still, looking in perplexity and growing excitement from one to the other. This was not so simple as the plumber affair after all.

"Tell me, Katie," asked her father gently, "is that the only reason you don't like me—because I am rough?"

At this point Katie's excitement and fear that she was going to be punished overcame her. She burst into tears, and sobbed out—

"You want to take me away, nurse says, and I don't want to go. And mamma didn't want to go; and you made her ill; and you made her die; and I won't go. Aunt Susie, don't let him take me!" And she threw herself weeping into the arms of her embarrassed, but not altogether displeased, aunt.

"Poor child, she is fond of us all; and she is afraid of strangers."

"Not afraid, I think," her father answered with a strange smile; "she seems to have courage enough—but I would rather have seen a little affection this afternoon."

"That will come in time."

"If she stays here?"

She looked up at him quickly.

"Will you leave her with us then?"

"To learn to dislike me? perhaps to despise me?"

"That would be impossible, when she learns to understand. No one here does *that*," said Miss Leake, recovering herself. "This is the nurse's fault, a new girl, who shall be sent away at once."

"Don't you think it is the fault of the—atmosphere?" he asked.

Miss Leake looked at him in surprise. She had never heard him speak in this way before. His simplicity had always seemed to nullify his strength of will in his dealings with her. She was not prepared for shrewdness and sarcasm.

"I think you are doing us an injustice," she answered with dignity; "I hope so."

Katie was still weeping on her aunt's shoulder. Perhaps it was the most discreet thing she could do under the circumstances.

"Shall I send her away to the nursery?" Miss Leake asked.

"There is no need. I am going out," he said; "you can keep her with you."

So Katie was left to be scolded gently and consoled abundantly, while her father went out to the solitary hill-side to meditate on this last bitter experience.

It was hard to leave his child to such influences, yet, to a man of his nature, it would have been harder still to tear her away against her will.

Besides, he was uncertain of his own fitness to take charge of so delicate a creature, uncertain of his right to deprive her of the advantages which an education in England and a home among her mother's friends would give to her—from the ordinary point of view. Would not Agnes have desired that her child should retain the social advantages, the comfort, the luxury, the refinement, for which she had herself sacrificed love and home? Would not Katie herself, when she was old enough to understand, decide that her father was selfish to have deprived her of these things? What had he to give her in place of them, that a woman could value? Agnes had loved him—and left him; her sisters esteemed him—and disliked him. His own little child, with an inherited refinement and a cultivated fastidiousness, had already found him unsatisfactory.

It was a hard thing, indeed, that he who so easily inspired confidence in children should have received this repulse from his own little one; he would have given her tenderness, sympathy and protection; but she took those as a matter of course, and demanded something more. His strength of character, his persistent purpose, his patient kindness, seemed to avail him nothing in this fastidious world in which his wife had lived, and from which his infant daughter looked at him with disapproving eyes. Negative qualities were asked from him here, rather than positive ones, and it was the positive in which he excelled. He was too old now to be trained into something smooth and highly polished; he could work and he could love; but the child of his love, the little creature in whose pulses his own life was beating, looked upon him with alien eyes, and recognized him as not of her class.

He could yield his claim to her love, but he could not take the risk of seeing her turn upon him, and tell him that his affection had been a cruelty, his claim a destruction of the rights inherited from her mother.

Therefore, he went back to Australia a lonely man once more. Every one told him that it was the only thing possible to do. His child would be educated and cared for as her delicate nature required, and when she was old enough she could join him, or he could come home to her.

Miss Leake was full of anxious humility. She showed a desire to conform to Henry Dilworth's wishes in every detail of Katie's education, and spoke as if she felt herself a mere subordinate hired to carry out his plans. She was sincerely grieved at the slight he had received, and ashamed that her teaching had left it possible for the child to speak so improperly. She did her best to atone for this injury while he remained at the Stepping Stones; and little Katie herself, growing used to his presence, and finding that she was not to be taken away, adopted a tardy friendship for her father, and forgave him the roughness of his hands for the sake of the height and general comfortableness of his shoulder. Thence she surveyed the world with satisfied eyes, and discoursed with much affability. She even offered to teach her father to talk French, if he would stay long enough to learn.

But life at the Stepping Stones was too limited for him, and he went back to his old work alone.

PART III.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER THE EMSDALE TREES.

A YOUNG man and woman were riding slowly up a wooded lane half a mile from the Stepping Stones. The purple grey of distant mountains was seen in a gap where the lane turned; and behind the trees on each side rose the nearer hills, which met here in a kind of pass—on the one hand with a steep rocky front, on the other in a broken face of crags and knolls. The warm sunlight was modified by the overhanging foliage, there was a sweet scent of vegetation in the air, a fitful concert of birds, the running accompaniment of a river near at hand.

"Yes," the young lady was saying, with her pretty chin in the air, and a somewhat supercilious expression on her countenance, "I don't deny that it's a beautiful country; and you who belong to it may well be satisfied to spend your life here."

Her companion lifted his eyebrows a little as he answered, "You don't happen to belong to it, I suppose. It didn't occur to you to be born here?"

"It was by a kind of accident that it did; and you know that I don't consider this my home; my home is properly in Australia; I have told you so a hundred times," she answered with impatience.

"It's an odd sort of home that you have never seen, and never are likely to see; if I may make such an obnoxious remark."

The girl's face flushed with vexation.

"Why should you say so? How do you know?"

"I never hear any one speak of such a possibility except yourself," was the reply, "and Miss Leake seems vexed when you refer to it."

"Oh," answered the girl, with the easy contempt of youth and inexperience, "because Aunt Susie has hardly been out of Elmdale in her life she thinks no one else ought to go. Elmdale isn't the world, but she thinks it is. However, when my father wants me, she will have to let me go."

"Is your father likely to want you?" the young man asked quietly, and with a quick glance of observation at her face.

It flushed again as she replied impatiently, "I should think so; it is only natural that he should, as much as I want to go to him. Of course I must join him as soon as he considers me old enough."

"And you have been educated with this view?" he asked somewhat sarcastically.

"How unkind you are! Does it require a special education to go to Australia, and live with one's own father?"

"When one's own father happens to be a remarkable man of original—not to say eccentric—habits of self-denial, and one happens to be oneself a young lady of fastidious tastes and luxurious fashion of living."

"I don't consider myself luxurious; I'm sure my tastes are very simple."

"Oh, yes, everything working so smoothly that you don't know there's any work at all going forward; I know the style of simplicity. The

wheels of life revolving out of sight, and not even smelling of the oil that makes them run easily! If you went out to Australia you'd be wretched yourself, and a nuisance to your father—and it's my opinion that he's a pretty shrewd idea of it, or he would have sent for you long before this."

The young girl—who, indeed, was no other than Henry Dilworth's daughter, Kate—was silent. Her face had become serious, and a little troubled. It was after an interval of some moments that she said slowly—

"That isn't a pleasant thing to think—that I should be a nuisance to my own father."

"It wouldn't be your fault, nor his either; I don't mean that it would. But he's been roughing it out there until he's an old man, and you've been living daintily here until you are a woman. Mark my words, you were never *intended* to go out to him in Australia. If you had been, why did he never come to see you? and where would be the use of your fine boarding-school, and so on?"

"Every one must be *educated*, of course."

"What do you call education? If you are educated, your father isn't—from all accounts. For his system of life seems to be the opposite of yours. He's always doing something; now, so far as I can make out the scheme of your education, it seems to me to indicate that you have been carefully and precisely brought up—to do nothing."

"I can do multitudes of things."

"Can you cook a chop? can you nurse a sick man? can you make a dress? can you light a fire?"

"There has never been any need for me to do those things, or I should have learnt them, of course."

"Then you'd better stay in a country where you won't be called upon to do them. I should fancy that they are precisely the things which you would find useful in the life you'd lead with your father."

Kate looked thoughtful; the subject was a serious one to her, and she was not inclined to quarrel with her companion's plain speaking; she had too little of that in her life to satisfy her; and it was precisely because he indulged in it rather freely that she favoured this new and younger Jack Longford with her particular friendship.

"I could learn it all," she said.

"If you had been intended to learn it, you would have been taught long ago. I do really believe, Kate, that your father does not want you. He is too much occupied in his own pursuits to have a woman about him. If he wants one, why did your mother never go back with him to Australia?"

Kate's gravity increased.

"She was so delicate; she was never strong enough; Aunt Susie always says so," she replied in a low voice.

"Then your father might have come to live in England."

Kate looked at him with a flushed face, and spoke quickly.

"Sometimes I think, Jack, that my father hasn't been fairly treated by my mother's friends. Aunt Susie is so narrow. She is very good, and she has spoilt me dreadfully. But then she shouldn't have spoilt me! And she doesn't understand rules that don't apply to her life here in Elmdale. My father is too big a man for Elmdale; he belongs to the world."

"Very likely you are correct, and Australia gives breathing room even for a man destined to fill the world with his life; but you, may I be permitted to observe, have been especially trained for—Elmdale."

"Never mind me. I was speaking of my father. Perhaps he is not like the men round here—I am sure he may well be different without loss"—she said this with a touch of scorn in her voice—"perhaps he does not care for little points of etiquette and propriety; I should fancy from things that have been said that he doesn't. And then my aunts were—ashamed of him. Ashamed of a man like that! so much too great and good for them to understand!"

"I can well believe all you say. I have heard something not unlike it myself. I can even believe about the goodness being beyond the Elmdale comprehension; and therefore, allow me to submit, it would very possibly prove beyond yours."

"Mine? I am his daughter."

"Theoretically, yes. Practically, you belong to your mother's side exclusively."

"How cruel of you to say so!"

Jack Longford laughed at her vehemence.

"Your aunt would think it a compliment."

"My aunt—always my aunt! It is my father I think of; it is my father I want to belong to; that I may make up to him for all he has missed, for all my mother could not be."

Jack took his turn of silent meditation for a few moments; then he observed, "I'm not inclined to think you over-rate your father's qualities; he has something of the cut of a hero about him from all accounts; but heroes are not always the pleasantest characters in domestic life. Your mother may have had her reasons."

"She was so delicate," Kate repeated.

"Pooh, delicate! She started for Australia with a sister; she might have repeated the experiment with her husband; especially as he had brought her back safely the first time, when no one else could. No, I never heard of your father doing a mean thing; I have heard of him doing many fine ones; he is certainly a man to be proud of; but *to live with!* That is quite another thing. We hear so much of his great qualities that it makes one doubt about his little ones; for our friends praise us so much more readily for little than for big virtues, that when these are not mentioned it looks bad. The little ones are so much more important, don't you know?"

"Well—if he had a bad temper, I shouldn't care."

"He may have a bad temper," said Jack meditatively, "but I rather think he hasn't; for he lived three months at the Stepping Stones, and went away without having quarrelled with any one."

"What a thing to say!"

"Well, I've a great liking for your aunts, as you know, and a great respect for them; but it would be rather trying to me to live in the same house for three months, don't you think?"

"If they could only hear you!"

"I'm afraid my conversation isn't as improving as it might be. Yet they persist in trusting you to my influence to a remarkable degree. The fact is that I conform to the great moral laws on the important points; I get my coats at

the right place, and I dine like other people; your aunts are too reasonable to ask more."

"My father didn't do this, you think?"

"I should fancy he didn't. But then he must have been ridiculously conscientious in small matters, or he would surely have succeeded in undermining your aunt's influence over your mother, and have carried her off in spite of them."

"In spite of them?"

"Yes, I am sure they were determined that she shouldn't go—perhaps he didn't want her; but I can't understand a man's not wanting his wife, even if he feels afterwards that his daughter would be a nuisance."

"Thank you."

"I put it to your common sense to say whether you *wouldn't* be a nuisance, and dreadfully in the way of a man like your father. He would have to change his mode of life altogether if you went to him."

"I could change mine."

"You would mean to, but you couldn't. You hardly know where the difference lies; your habits have become your second nature; you'd have a thing your own way from sheer ignorance of the fact that it's not the only way possible."

"I shall see—when he sends for me," Kate answered proudly.

"He never will send. He would not have left you to be brought up in this fashion if he had meant it. But if you want to go, why don't you write and ask him if you may?"

"No," said Kate, her cheeks flushing, "I shall never go to him unless he wants me."

(To be continued.)

THE SANDS OF EGYPT.

IT has been often a sad subject of regret in connection with those who have been buried at sea, that no tender offices of affection can be exhibited towards their resting-places. No aged forms can kneel there; no children mark the grass with their little footsteps, or cast their simple wreaths of daisies on the stone.

Many aching hearts, during the last few painful weeks, must have been visited with similar regrets for those who have fallen in Egypt, and been buried in the distant and inaccessible sands. The consolation lies in the thought that the loved and lost ones will be ultimately found. Some striking lines in the old play of the *Devil's Law Case*, by John Webster, embodying this comfort, mention the desert as one of those desolate places where the heart most shrinks from depositing these precious burdens:—

What care I then, though my last sleep
Be in the desert or in the deep;
No lamps, nor taper, day and night,
To give my charnel chargeable light.
I have there like quantity of ground,
And at the last day I shall be found.

The *Urn-burial* of Sir Thomas Brown, it will be remembered, terminates with a like sublime cheerfulness:—

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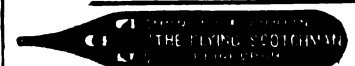
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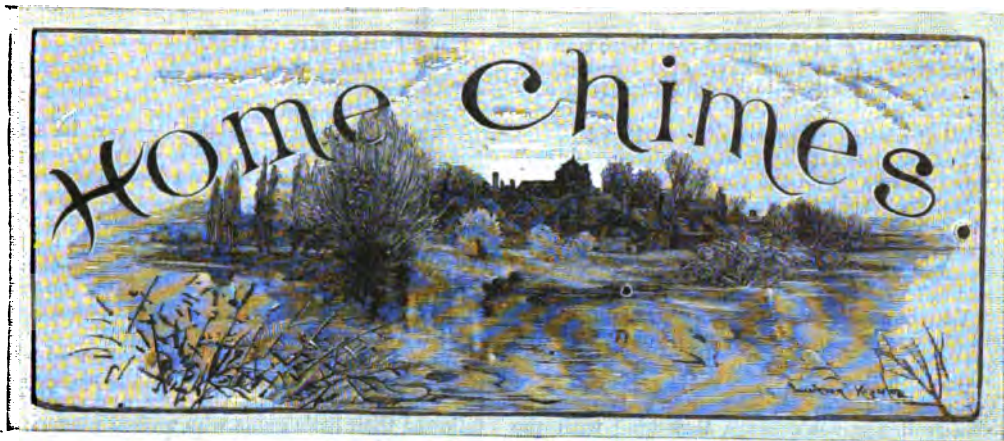
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VOL. II. No. 28.]

LONDON: JUNE 6, 1885.

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PETER MCGUIRE,

A NAVY YARN,

SPUN BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

CHAPTER I.

PETER'S EARLY YEARS.

WHEN I tell you, to commence with, that both heroes of the following "ower true" story were doctors, that one of my heroes is also my villain, and that he was a Scotchman, I do not think I can be accused of favouring either my cloth or my country.

Peter McGuire was the name of the latter. More of an Irish name than a Scotch? Granted. But that is no fault of mine. Peter was born and brought up on the borders of Ross and Inverness—Scotch enough in all conscience. Reared in so wild and beautiful a country, it was only natural that Peter should, as a boy, have been attracted to a study of the lives and habits of the thousand and one strange and lovely denizens of the moorland, mountain, and forest.

He became a kind of practical natural historian, and at the age of fifteen could have told you a deal you wouldn't have found in books.

"Bother long names though," Peter would have said, had you attempted to lead him into the labyrinths of nomenclature and classification.

When only a tiny boy, Peter was one day squatting in the sunshine at the edge of a turnip-field. The "shaws" of the turnip he had just eaten were lying at no great distance.

Having dined so well, Peter was enjoying the *dolce far niente*, and playing in a listless kind of way with a large specimen of the Iulus, which he had placed for convenience of study on his Latin Grammar.

"Here's a lad will tell us," said a voice in the clouds apparently.

Peter looked up, and saw standing near him a very tall Englishman, in the Highland dress—not a *rara avis* in Scotland—and a young lady.

"My little lad, can you tell us how far we are from Lok-na-breaching?"

He pronounced the name as I have spelled it.

Young as he was, Peter couldn't help wondering why a gentleman who could not pronounce a Gaelic word should wear the dress of a Celt.

"Loch-na-Briachan, sir?" said the boy. "Five miles, sir."

"Sit down, my dear, and rest," said the Saxon to his fair companion.

Down they both sat on the grass near Peter, and Peter looked them well all over before he spoke. Then he opened fire, and the conversation, which, as it happened, became the turning point in Peter's career, went on as follows:—

"You're an Englishman, sir, arn't you?"

"Yes, my boy; but how do you know?"

"You're knees are so white, sir."

"Well, they're not so brown as your face. Why, your face is like a brick, my lad, and your very hair is sunburnt."

"So would yours be if you never wore a bonnet."

The lady, who was young and very pretty, laughed.

"What trade do you follow, sir?"

"Oh," said the Englishman, "I'm a—a gentleman."

"Oh," said Peter, "that must be fine fun. Boen fishing?" he asked.

"Not to-day. I've been gathering specimens. That fishing-basket is full of them."

"What would you give me for this?" said Peter, pointing with a twig to his Iulus.

"Why," said the gentleman, "you are, like myself, a naturalist."

"I don't know what that means, but I'll sell this specimen."

"Do you know what it is, my lad?"

"Finely. He is a second-cousin-german by the mother's side to the forty-footed Jeannie (the centiped). His father was a forky-tail (the earwig)."

"What a wonderful piece of genealogy!"

"Yes, sir, that's it—forty-footed Jeanniealogy."

"Is it dead?" said the young girl.

"Not he," said Peter; "he is only pretending to be. That's why he is curled up. But if I were to turn my back, he'd be on his legs in a moment, and off the Latin Grammar, and into his hole."

"You don't learn Latin grammar, do you?" said the pretty young lady; "so young a boy as you!"

"Don't I though! My soul! If you were at the school I'm at, and didn't learn your Latin grammar, you'd get a thrashing with the fawse that would make your skin dirl for a week."

"Well, I'm glad I'm not there."

"And now, my lad, I'll tell you the real name of your sleeping——"

"He's not sleeping; he's foxing."

"Well, foxing specimen. It is a good specimen of the *Iulus terrestris*, belonging to the Chilognatha of Latreille; natural family, myriopoda."

The boy looked wonderingly at the specimen.

"I didn't know," he said, "he had such a dandy long name as that."

The young lady brought out her sketch-book; it was full of bits: little odds and ends that would come in handy for the corners of landscapes, &c.; trees, patches of grass, gorse, creeping things, wild fruit and wild flowers.

Peter was delighted, and took no pains to hide his delight. He was a freethinker in the matter of art, however, and his criticisms greatly amused the lady and gentleman.

"Will you come and spend the day with us among the hills, and tell us everything and show us things?" asked the English gentleman.

"Yes," cried Peter, his eyes sparkling with pleasure; "but first——"

Here he snatched up the Latin grammar, shook the specimen off it and thrust the book into the young lady's hand.

"From there to there," he said.

Then off he rattled as fast as tongue could speak or splutter it, a whole page in verse of Arnold's Latin Grammar.

"That'll do," he said. "I have it, if I don't forget it. If I do forget it, my song! I'll catch it."

That was one of the most delightful days ever Peter spent among the mountains. He did show the strangers everything and told them a deal they never knew before; and both were surprised at his knowledge of natural history.

Before they parted, Peter to go down one side of the mountain to his mother's little cot in the glen, his new-found friends down the other, to the many-gabled hotel about a mile distant.

Said Peter, "You've talked so kindly to me and spoken so frank and free like, that there is one other thing I have a good mind to let you see."

"What is it, my boy?"

"Mind, you mustn't harry it."

"Oh, no."

"And if ever you go near it again, you'll be sure no boys see you."

"We'll make sure of that."

"Say 'As sure as death.'"

"As sure as death."

"Ring bottle-bells."*

With great gravity—which, however, he found it somewhat difficult to maintain—Lord D—— (for the strange gentleman was no less a personage) hooked his little finger into that of this little Highland lad, and the solemn compact was completed.

"Now," said Peter, "follow me. Gently. Hush! We haven't far to go. Walk on your tip-toes, and may be you'll see the old hen whaup† herself."

Without having the slightest notion of what they were going to see, or what the mystery an old "hen-whaup" was, the lady and gentleman followed their little guide who walked gingerly on in front of them through the heather and bents and rushes.

Suddenly he paused and commanding silence with uplifted finger pointed with his other hand.

"Look at her!" he whispered delightedly.

"Look at the long 'neb' of her, and her old-fashioned face!" Up flew the great whaup, with a rush and a roar, which quite startled the young lady.

Then with tears of enthusiasm in his eyes, the boy knelt admiringly beside the great dark-green speckled eggs.

"Oh, beautiful! beautiful!" he exclaimed.

"Wonderful boy! indeed," said Lord D—— to his sister as the two sat at dinner that same evening in the hotel at Loch-na-Briachan. "Wonderful boy! Knows a good deal in the natural history way, that neither you nor I do, Priscilla. Clever? undoubtedly. Do something for him? Eh? 'Pon my soul, I don't see why we shouldn't or why we couldn't. He might turn out to be a professor or a prime minister or something, there is never any telling. Yes, I don't mind going with you to-morrow to see his mother. It will help to pass away the forenoon."

All the time that Lord D—— and his sister remained in that district Peter McGuire acted as their guide, and they had no end of fun out of the little fellow, for he was quite an original. Even when told that his newly-found friend was a real live lord, Peter was not in the slightest degree put out. He looked at his lordship up and down for fully fifteen seconds, as if trying to discover in what particular way he differed from other human beings, but failing to find this out, he just continued to talk to him as if he had been common clay instead of egg-shell china. And Lord D—— liked him all the better for his independence.

Lord D——*did* do something for Peter. He put Peter to a good school. He assisted Peter at college. And finally thanks in a great measure to his patron's kindness, Peter passed with flying colours and came out as a full-blown Medico. Then he entered the service.

Peter McGuire served here and there all over the seas, and finally had a leg shot away in a fight with pirates in the Persian Gulf. But Peter

* Ringing bottle-bells, a ceremony with which little boys in the far north of Scotland conclude all bargains of a serious nature.—G. S.

† A whaup is a curlew.

was quite as happy with one leg as he had been with the two. Nor did he invest in a cork one with a boot at the end of it, which, at all events would have disguised the deficiency. Not he. He just stumped around with a wooden one in the good old dot-and-carry-one fashion.

Of course Peter was not going to leave the service because he had lost a leg. He got appointed as Assistant Surgeon to the Symon's Town Hospital, Cape of Good Hope, and after that he went straight away to Cape Town itself and got married, or "spliced" as he termed it. It is to be presumed that previous to this matrimonial expedition to the Cape capital, Peter had had the lady in his eye. At all events he did not bother with a protracted courtship. He took her for a walk one moonlight evening to the botanical gardens, and they sat down together on a seat beside a cotton tree.

Then Peter watched his chance till there was no one coming or going either way, when down he flopped upon one knee—he couldn't kneel on two, you know, because he hadn't got them.

"Behold me at your feet," said Peter, "leastways all that's left of me is yours to command my darling, heart and brain, and all the contents of the thorax, joints, ligaments —."

"Get up," she cried "and don't be an idiot."

"Never," exclaimed Peter, "till you say 'Rise Peter.'"

"Rise Peter," said the young lady.

Then up he jumped, and kissed the lady's laughing lips, and called her his own little Cape pigeon, and a deal else that nobody need know anything about.

But here ended the courting, and a wedding came next, and all the ships in the Bay were dressed, because Peter McGuire was a favourite with everybody.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT THE SNAKE DID FOR PETER.

PETER came stamping in one morning with a newspaper fresh from England, in his hand.

His wife was seated at the breakfast table.

"Come away, dear," said Peter's wife; "this is the best curry you ever tasted, and Queshoo has taken pains with the rice, too."

"Bother curry, hang the rice," cried Peter, pitching the paper to one end of the room, and throwing his uniform cap after it.

"Peter! my love Peter! what is it?"

"What is it? eh? Why, the provokingest thing ever I heard of. Instead of me getting the vacant surgeoncy to this hospital, they're sending out a buffer three years—only three years—senior to me."

"Peter, my dear, keep cool. You always did do things rashly. Keep cool, I say, and don't burst a blood-vessel. Perhaps Peter, my sweet love, your letter didn't reach Lord D—— in time."

"Well, well," replied Peter, "maybe you're right; women generally are. Give me some curry. It's just like my luck. I wonder what sort of a chap the new surgeon will be. I shall be quite gruff to him."

"No you won't, Peter. You won't be *my* Peter if you behave in any degree rude to him."

In due time the new surgeon arrived, a very solemn, tall individual, about five and thirty, evidently much impressed with the dignity of his position. His coat looked as though it had come newly out of a band-box, his gold lace was of the colour of a sovereign fresh from the mint, and so were all his buttons.

He wore a tall hat, with a cockade and "lightning conductor;"* it *was* uniform, but most *outré* and ridiculous looking.

On the whole Peter didn't like him, and took no pains to hide his want of respect, though he was always duty-polite. One day Peter ventured to tell him a good thing.

"Hum! yes," said Surgeon Smeller; "but I never joke with juniors."

Joke with juniors! Peter McGuire told his wife that night it must have been a merciful Providence that prevented him from knocking Surgeon Smeller's hat into the middle of next month, and pitching Surgeon Smeller after it. Joke with juniors indeed!

About a week after this, Peter, who was just as ardent a student of natural history now as he had been when a boy, forgot a snake which he had left in the waiting-room. The creature, a whip snake, had been caught by Peter up at the old graveyard. He thought he had killed it, and had placed it in a nice clear bottle, meaning to fill up with gin. But the snake had awoke, and begun to wriggle round, and at that very moment the eyes of Surgeon Smeller fell upon the bottle.

He sprang out of his chair as if shot.

"Good heavens! I'm appalled! The thing's alive. Take it away; my pet aversion is snakes!"

Peter went away whistling, with the bottle in his hand, the wee malignant eyes of the creature glaring at him through the glass.

He entered his room, and his wife put a letter into his hand. It was from Lord D——. It assured Peter of his sympathy, and his sorrow that his letter had not reached him—Lord D———till the appointment was filled up. He would, it added, do his best for Peter next time.

"It is a five year's appointment though," said Peter to his wife, "five years under old Smeller!"

Then Peter whistled again.

Peter always whistled when thinking.

Then he got up and walked about the room, laughing and chuckling to himself. He sat down beside the table presently, and took up the bottle with the snake in it, and looked at it long and earnestly.

"Joke with juniors!" he told the snake; "Dr. Smeller *never* jokes with juniors; ha! ha! ha!"

He put Lord D——'s letter on top of the bottle, and stuck a pin through it, and placed the whole away on the side-board.

"What have you done that for Peter, my love?" his wife inquired.

"It's only a *memo*," answered Peter, with a smile.

But somehow this villain of mine, this Peter McGuire, felt so happy and hopeful at that moment, that he must needs put one arm round his little Cape pigeon's waist and give her a husbandly kiss.

* The double stripes of gold lace is so called.

Tap, tap, tap. It was a knock at the door, and the sick-bay man entered.

"Dr. Smeller would like you to come to duty, forthwith," said the man, saluting.

"Forthwith, eh? Did he say forthwith?"

"Thems his very words, sir," said Rogers.

"Just so. 'Forthwith!' He borrowed that word from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, Rogers. Well, give Smeller my compliments, and tell him to go and hang himself."

"Oh, Rogers! don't," cried Mrs. McGuire.

"I think I'd better not, sir," said Rogers.

"Well, I dare say you're right, Rogers. Tell Dr. Smeller that his junior will be with him in two turns of the capstan."

"Ay, ay, sir."

Rogers and my villain were closeted together that same evening for more than an hour.

This was strange and even mysterious.

They both came out together at last; Rogers was smiling, Peter was smiling too, and, with one hand on the sick-bay man's shoulder, was whispering something in his ear.

Next day was Sunday, and, as usual on Sundays, Peter McGuire took his wife for a long walk. As a rule they went along the road to the far off point, or down by the sea-shore among the rocks. But to-day Peter said to his Cape pigeon—

"My darling," he said, "let us deviate; let us make a detour."

The Cape pigeon did not mind where she went so long as Peter was near her.

So he led her away up across the moorland hills, where geraniums and wild heath grew in glorious profusion.

The heath was often as high as Peter's waist. Instead of looking around him, as he usually did, at the hills and the sky, his wife noticed that he kept his eyes buried among the heather, so to speak. This was strange and mysterious. Several times she heard things rustling among the grass, but she did not look; it was as well, perhaps, she didn't.

Presently Peter sprang away from her side with a peculiar kind of a hop.

"That's got him," he cried exultingly.

"Oh! Peter," screamed his wife; "the snake! the snake! It's twisted round your leg."

Peter looked at her with a calm and happy smile on his countenance.

"I know it," he said; "but its twisted round the wooden one. That's where the snake made a mistake, my pretty pigeon. Ha! ha! I always catch them all like that. But don't look so scared, darling. It's only a clotho, a broadhead."

"Oh! Peter," cried his wife, "do come away, there's a dear. I shall go out of my mind with perfect fright!"

"Come away? Eh? Nay, love, I can't just yet. I've got my timber-toe on the clotho's neck. I want to stun him, but I can't move till he relaxes, else he might strike at my best leg, you know, and stun me."

"Oh! ah! Peter, Peter, look——"

An immense hooded snake had slowly raised itself not ten yards away.

"It's looking this way, Peter. Ah! ah!"

"Here's my cane," said Peter. "Keep quiet and hit it. Don't yell, silly."

The snake fell back.

"Lost!" cried Peter. "Lost! Truly, one of

the most beautiful specimens of the Naia Haje, the Spuugh-Slang, or spitting snake, ever I came across. But he's gone! Now, the clotho is going to relax."

Peter lifted his timber-toe, and, as his horrid prisoner did not move, he took him by the tail, and put him in a bag.

"I shall dream about this all night," said the poor little Cape pigeon. "I would faint this moment, if I wasn't afraid to fall on a snake. Ugh! Peter, how could you?"

"Keep up your heart, my pet. You'll laugh at all this yet. I tell you what it is, my dear, snakes are our very best friends."

But his wife only shook her head and repeated, "How could you, Peter? Peter, how could you?"

The very next week a letter appeared in a Cape paper, signed "Natrix," describing the manners and customs of no less than eleven poisonous snakes found in and around Symon's Bay. A copy was posted to Surgeon Smeller, and he read the letter against his will. He could not help it. The words seemed to possess the power of fascination which some deadly snakes exercise on their victims before they strike.

He read it at breakfast.

He was coming slowly towards the waiting-room. He couldn't get some of the awful descriptions out of his mind. They had burned themselves into his very soul. The triangular head, the fixed and ever watchful eyes, the narrow cylindrical tongue, the dreadful fangs!

"It is true," the letter ended, "that snakes can stand erect or hang by the tail from branches of trees, that they can eject their venom for yards, that they can spring long distances, that they jump and bound, many of them backwards, that in a word,

They swim, and dive, and dart, and leap,
And glide, and glare, and grasp, and creep."

Poor Smeller! at that very moment he kicked against something. It was only a morsel of rope, but it sent a cold shudder through every nerve in his body.

When he entered the room, he found Peter McGuire—my villain—sitting at a table with dissecting tools in his hand and a glass in one eye, precisely like those that watchmakers wear. In front of him was *his subject*.

He jumped up when he saw Dr. Smeller, and held his subject behind him.

"I forgot," he said, "that your pet aversion, was jokes from juniors—I beg pardon—I mean, snakes, sir, snakes."

Smeller went regularly to church every Sunday with his long hat on—the hat with the lightning conductor.

One day Smeller felt something moving under his cushion. It was a tiny cobra.

Peter nodded and laughed, and killed it and sat down. But Surgeon Smeller went straight home.

Worse was to come, and it finished Smeller so far as the hospital at Symon's Bay was concerned.

Rogers brought a whole lot of curious looking eggs to Peter one day. They weren't unlike a lot of puff balls all on a string.

Peter was rejoiced.

So was Rogers, because he went away with a handsome present under his pilot jacket.

A week after this a very pretty, tiny, triangular snake came wriggling out of a slipper that Dr. Smeller was about to put on. It looked very saucy and very old-fashioned, but it was only an infant *Naia-nigra*.

Smeller sent for Rogers, Rogers sent for Peter, Peter put a towel on the "warmint," which had taken refuge under a footstool.

"Do you think there are more?" cried Smeller.

"Very likely a dozen," said Peter coolly. "It is very interesting; I'll make a note of it. But don't worry, sir; they are only *juniors*."

Remember, reader, Peter is my villain; but it is time to tell you also that this yarn of mine is true.

"Do you think, sir," gasped Smeller, "the mother is anywhere about?"

"Quite as likely as not, and the father too," replied the villain. "It is a most curious thing, sir, but maternal instincts are singularly strong in snakes, and in their domestic relations——"

"Stop, stop!" roared the surgeon. "I shall clear out of here. It is awful!"

Dr. Smeller was as good as his word; he stopped that night in the hotel—poor Grout was there then. I don't think he slept much though, for that maddening doggerel kept running through his excited brain, and he often started up muttering—

They dart and leap, and grasp and creep!

Well, just one week afterwards, Dr. Smeller put himself on the sick-list for lumbago and a few other minor ailments, and in due time was invalided home.

I wish I could add that my villain never prospered afterwards. If I was writing only ordinary facts I would do so; but I am penning true facts, so I am a sort of handicapped.

Yes, my villain prospered, for next mail brought him his promotion, and re-appointment to the hospital as surgeon.

"See what snakes have done for us," cried Peter, pushing the letter into the Cape pigeon's hand. "Didn't I tell you, darling—Ha, ha, ha!"

And my villain went stumping round the room with that timber toe of his in a way that certainly did not improve the carpet.

"Lord D—— has done it, my dear," said his wife. "You don't call Lord D—— a snake?"

"No, I don't call Lord D—— a snake. But I tell you snakes are at the bottom of the whole business. Ah, here comes Rogers! Rogers, you rascal, we're all right! I've been promoted—hurrah!"

"The '*juniors*' did it, sir," said Rogers, laughing.

"Yes, Rogers. Jokes upon juniors—Ha, ha! Lord D—— is a brick, my dear, and—there's nothing like *SNAKES*!"

WHOM THE GODS LOVE DIE YOUNG.

WHOM the gods love die young: resigned, yet cheerless,

The Roman mother stood beside the pyre,
And with a gaze in stony sadness fearless,

Kindled her laughing baby's funeral fire.

Whom the gods love die young: the stern old Stoic

Bent o'er his youthful warrior's blood-stained bed;

"He had life's best, then why not be heroic?"

And in chill calm the last farewell was said.

Whom the gods love die young: the Grecian lover

Kissed the pale lips so red but yester eve:

"We had a dream, a golden dream—'tis over;

Had she lived longer she had lived to grieve."

Whom our God loves die young: far other meaning,

Oh, Lord of life, those words they bring to-day,
To those who on Thy mighty arm are leaning

While they march singing up the narrow way.

Whom our God loves dies young: the unwedded maiden,

With faded cheek, but light elastic tread,

Who scatters love from heart and mind fruit-laden,

Her youth's clear halo shining round her head.

Whom our God loves dies young: the veteran knightly,

Who, though truth's cause the losing cause appears,

Still battles on, his falchion flashing brightly,

With all the perfect faith of boyhood's years.

Whom our God loves dies young: the wife and mother,

Who, in earth's miry mart of gilded show,

Still wears her girlhood's crown, and asks no other,

With purest gems of innocence aglow.

Whom our God loves dies young: the reverent seeker

In nature, or in science' secret way,

On heights of knowledge growing still the meeker,

The merry friend of children at their play.

Whom our God loves die young: oh! gracious mystery

Of deathless youth, of youth that laughs at time,

Wonder of wonders on the page of history.

Homeliest of music in the sweet home chime.

ALICE KING.

A GAME OF CHANCE.

BY HORACE VICKARS REES,

Author of "At the Sign of the Silver Bells," &c.

CHAPTER V.

AN OFFER.

Mrs. FROTHINGLEY started from her easy chair, and uttered a sharp exclamation of surprise. She had turned round upon hearing the door open, and found Harvey Carroll standing in the room, still and silent as a statue. He was looking down at her with a terrible calmness, and a weird light

shone in his grave, penetrating eyes, which made her, bold and self-possessed as she was, shiver a little with apprehension of the coming storm.

"He has met Frank," she thought swiftly, "and has learned everything."

Still he did not speak. His mind was yet too full of tumultuous emotion to suffer him to articulate calmly.

"What is the matter with you, Harvey?" she said at length, with forced composure. "Where have you been? How did you come in? I did not hear your knock. Don't stare at me in that unearthly manner, for goodness' sake! Have you seen Frank? He has only just gone."

She hurried on from one sentence to another, as if fearful of keeping silence.

"I have seen him." He spoke slowly, and with unnatural calmness.

"Then you know everything?" she inquired nervously.

"I do."

For once in her life she felt afraid of this man. His strange passiveness alarmed her.

"What have you done this for, Eva?" he said at length.

"Done what?" she answered evasively.

"This devilry—the sending of this boy to headlong ruin, under the auspices of your two precious accomplices. What have you done this for?"

Once, and once only, her natural boldness attempted to reassert itself, and she answered him haughtily.

"Pray do not insult me in my own house. I know nothing of your brother's affairs, and have nothing whatever—"

He stamped his foot violently on the carpet.

"Answer my question, madam," he said in a stern, masterful voice.

She looked at him for an instant in silence; she was unnerved, and, womanlike, her fortitude broke down beneath the force of her pent-up passion, which swept away every artifice and resolution in its fierce upheaving; and she answered him this time with a terrible truthfulness in the tremulous passion of her voice.

"Why did I send him astray? Because I hated you, Harvey Carroll—hated you as only a woman who has loved can hate! How dared you despise me—how dared you treat me with your calm indifference? Did we not love once? Were you not my humble follower—my devoted servant? Did you not live in the sunshine of my smiles, and swear to love me for ever? And do you think that a woman who has had scores of great men at her feet, who has intoxicated a roomful with her smiles, will submit to contempt from the one man she stooped to love? Pooh! you are too dull. You have scorned me, Harvey Carroll, and I hate you for it!"

A light was breaking in upon his bewildered mind, but he looked at her with heartfelt astonishment.

"You have honoured me too much," he said presently, with a touch of his old provoking manner. "I had thought that in the multitude of your conquests you had forgotten such a useless remembrance as the love of the lad whose young heart it amused you to break. But what has this to do with Frank's destruction?"

"You have wounded me," she said slowly;

"and I had vowed to wound you in return." Is it nothing to you that your brother is ruined, and that your father will be well-nigh distracted? Is it nothing to you that this is the result of your confident promises for your brother's welfare? Ha, ha! I have made you feel, Dr. Harvey Carroll, at last!"

Her exultation was ungovernable; to her horror-stricken listener it appeared diabolical.

"Who has this deed—who lent this horrible money?" he asked slowly.

"I did!" she cried triumphantly, "although Caverton lent it ostensibly. See, here is the mortgage;" and she unlocked a drawer, and produced a formidable-looking document. "Its provisions are happily very peremptory; and I shall sell, Harvey Carroll—sell your dead mother's place to some retired butcher or sausage-maker to desecrate with his presence. And why, Harvey? Because you have dared to despise Eva Frothingley, and she has vowed that you should suffer for it!"

Her triumph seemed perfect, for the man before her was assuredly suffering already. His face gradually assumed a look of weary dejection; all the glad light that love a few brief moments before had lent to his countenance was darkened and gone under the weight of this fearful woman's ingenuity and bitter passion.

He sank into a chair, and hid his face in his hands. "Heaven help us!" he moaned. "My poor father! this will kill him."

She stood looking at him for some time with swiftly varying countenance. She had expected a storm of rebuke and upbraiding from him, and had looked for it as evidence of the serious hurt she had dealt him; but this dull, speechless dejection filled her with some wonderment, and even dismay. Cruel and vengeful as she was, she had not thought of his suffering like this. In reality, although it had fitted in with the promptings of her passion, it was a part of the play, this fierce outburst of hers, done to convince him of her power; a part of the wild plot she had conceived and carried out to gain her ends. It was very lamentable that her victim was too dull to assist her to the *dénouement*; a rant of storm and reproach might have led up to it, but sitting there so quiet and humbled, it seemed as if he had thrown up his part in despair. And, as she stood looking down at the dejected figure before her in the unnatural stillness of the room, a little of the fiend died out in Eva Frothingley's breast, and some of the woman awoke within her. For she was a woman, after all—a woman with fierce, ungovernable passions, but still a woman. And she loved this man whom she had taken such pains to crush—such pains as only a woman could take—loved him in her fierce, ungovernable way. For a moment her eyes rested upon the portrait on the console—the portrait which she had pressed so fervently to her lips; and then her eyes turned with a softer light to the man before her. And suddenly she crossed over to the silent figure, and in the abandon of a sudden, resistless impulse, she threw herself at his feet, and clutched him feverishly with her magnificent hands.

"Harvey—dear Harvey—speak to me! Harvey, you drive me mad!—for I love you, Harvey, with my whole soul!"

For an instant he turned, and looked at the passionate figure, in its grand, massive beauty, and shuddered.

"Love!" he echoed, with a world of scorn in his voice. "Is this your love?" And he turned his face from her once more.

"Yes, Harvey;" and she caught his hand convulsively between her jewelled fingers. "You are the one being I have loved in my life. Had I not suffered enough, that you should have tortured me with your indifference, your coldness? I loved you in the old, old time, but what was the use? We were both paupers. I married poor Frothingley for his money and his mansion, but I loved you still. When I met you again, a widow, free and wealthy, the old love still lived. But you were cold and changed, and I—I was still in love, like a romantic school-girl, and you drove me mad. You do not know what love means to women like me. It is a consuming fire; an endless flame. You do not know what it is to feel your youth and beauty passing away like a dream, and the tempest of passion still raging within your heart—your heart, which will never grow old. Love! They talk of its sweetness, its light, its ineffable beauty: to me it has been the rack, the scourge, the desolation of despair. Harvey—dear Harvey!—I have loved you all my life—I shall love you till I die!"

She was terribly in earnest; her voice quivered with emotion—the pent-up emotion of years. Again he looked at her—this time with some pity in the look—and never before, even in the days of his youthful infatuation, had she seemed to him so grandly beautiful as she did this night in her wild abasement. Her triumph had been short-lived. But his heart was too full for pity.

He sprang to his feet, and raised her from her kneeling position.

"I had thought the old fancy was dead," he said hoarsely. "Indeed I thought that you had never loved—that you could never love. It is too late now."

She clung to him despairingly. "No, Harvey, it is not too late. The old love will live again. It must, or I cannot live!"

She was mad with her passion.

The unlucky deed was lying on the table, where Eva had thrown it aside, and it caught his eye.

"What of that precious document?" he said sternly. "Are you still going to enforce it, and complete your vengeance?"

"No, Harvey—no!" she said eagerly; and she took the parchment in her hand. "See," and she held it over the bright-burning flame of the fire. "What is this to me when I cannot live without you, Harvey? Tell me that you love me—only say that you will love me again with the old love—and I will cast it into the fire."

She held it alluringly close to the flame, but she dared not look into his face.

"You know I am rich, Harvey," she went on with averted gaze. "My husband left me seven thousand a year, and it will be all yours if we are married."

A few hours before, with the recklessness that had become habitual to him, he might have said "Yes," in the knowledge that he was saving his brother from despair, and his father from shame; but his heart had gone out, and was no longer his own.

"You mean that the love that you flung away so heedlessly in the dead time you would now buy as the price of that shameful parchment?" he said with bitter bluntness.

"If you choose to put it so coarsely, Harvey—Yes," she answered in a low tone.

"I cannot do it. He must suffer."

For the first time since he had raised her she turned and looked at him.

"Do you mean that? Think again," she said in a dreamy tone.

"I cannot think again, Eva," he said quietly.

"My love, such as it is, is pledged."

All the great blaze of intoxicated fury that her softer passion had swept away returned in one swift instant to her mobile face, and she drew herself up in a perfect fury of wrath.

"And it is for this," she gasped, "for this that I have abased myself—that I, Eva Frothingley, have sunk so low. Leave me, perjured, miserable hypocrite! God in heaven!" she burst forth, "give me my vengeance on this man!"

"You have it," he said calmly. "A few short hours will fill to overflowing the cup of your wickedness. God forgive you, Eva Frothingley;" and he turned on his heel, and left the room.

She stood for a few moments transfixed, gazing at the closed door through which Harvey had passed; and then, as if realizing that with that stern, reproachful exit, had gone all the hope of her passionate life, all the burning desire of her womanhood's years, never to return to her, she flung herself, in wild despair, on a couch, and gave vent to her grief in a terrible passion of sobs and tears. Fierce, hardened, and implacable as a woman may become, one may well believe that the woman who can for ever close the well-springs of her heart's grief has not yet been born.

In the corridor outside Harvey found Grace awaiting him. She was trembling with excitement and apprehension, and her fears were not appeased by his appearance.

"You will be cautious, dear Harvey? You will not do anything rash, or be too hard upon Frank?" she whispered. "I believe it has been one horrid plot throughout."

"No, my dear," he answered, "I shall not see him."

He spoke dubiously, and she caught a slight hesitancy in his tone.

"Where are you going now?" she asked.

"I am going to the club. I am going to play—hush, my dear!" he said, stopping her anxious exclamation. "I am going to play for the last time in my life."

CHAPTER VI.

A GAME OF CHANCE.

THREE thousand pounds! The words were humming in Harvey Carroll's ears and haunting his brain, as he mounted the palatial staircase of the Junior Plungers.

Three thousand pounds! That was precisely the sum that he required. In fact, with a mad hope, born of distress, he had come there for it. A tolerably largish sum in its way—not very much to the Plungers collectively, but something, more or less, to each individual

Plunger according to the state of his bank balance. To Harvey Carroll that evening three thousand pounds was a matter of life or death: it was the price of his own and his father's peace of mind.

The strange events of the evening had awakened a turbulent excitement in his brain, which was not yet stilled; his passive despair had given way, under the swift instincts of the gambler, to a rising hope. In that garish card-room at the Plungers he had seen as much as five thousand pounds lost and won on the turning of a card; might it not be done again? For the first time in his life he had come there to play, not for mere excitement, as was his wont, but for money—to play for the possession of money with the fiercest greed of the fiercest gambler there. And perhaps the purpose hallowed the design. Why should he not play the Plungers for their money? He had poured oceans of his own into that voracious vortex with a bright laugh, and it had been swallowed up with untroubled satisfaction. And yet to his mind, despite these thoughts, it had appeared repulsive. He had been a gambler, but he was still a gentleman—a rare combination in these days, mark you, whatever our fathers may have accomplished in their time.

Yes, it had looked debasing at the first blush, so he went and dined when he got back to town, and looked at the question through the light of a quart of unimpeachable Pomeroy. The wine settled the question, and sent him off to his rooms with a reckless desire to plunge, neck or nothing, for the last time in his life. Yes, it should be the last time; he had vowed that fixedly. Another life had entered into his, and already its purifying influence had been felt. Another fact that inspiring wine had disclosed was that the world in particular had been very treacherous with him, and it aroused within him an overwhelming desire to be avenged upon the world in general.

Thus it was that he feverishly unlocked his money-drawer, and emptied the contents into his pocket, after counting it up hurriedly. There was a little over one hundred pounds in the drawer. He laughed recklessly as he thrust the money—gold and notes—in one indiscriminate heap into his pocket.

"It may as well go with the rest," he said lightly; "it is for the last time. And perhaps—who knows?—there is just a chance—pooh—what does it matter!"

It was in this reckless frame of mind that he entered the card-room at the Junior Plungers, just as the clocks were announcing the hour of midnight.

The room was tolerably full, and the demon of play was in full possession. Men might come and men might go, there might be dynamite scares, Red Republican scares, Tory scares, and every other kind of scare that haunts our lives in these excellent times; the Constitution might be shaken to its base and in the act of toppling over, but it was all one to the Plungers, many of whom would, I verily believe, have placidly seen the finish of that bet on the odd trick, even if the house had been on fire.

"I'll take the next bank, John," said Harvey to the ubiquitous attendant.

"Very good, sir. But I wouldn't, if I was you,

sir, to-night, by your leave," said John, in an apologetic whisper. "It's drefful to-night, doctor—somethink orful. Three fifty-pun banks broke in 'arf-an-hour. Captain Cuffer, sir, he's won ninety pound in twenty minutes a-puntin'. It's a drefful night for the bank!"

"Never mind, John," laughed Harvey; "I'll try my luck."

John went his way, with an imperceptible shake of his grey head.

"He's a rum 'un, the doctor; he don't care how his money goes. Blest if he don't chuck it away—clean chuck it away, I calls it!"

In a very short time the fourth banker had shared the fate of his three predecessors, and Harvey took his place at the head of the long table.

He was greeted with a chorus of pleasantries from the triumphant punters, for poor Harvey was the proverbially unlucky player of the club; but he only smiled, and laid a heap of money in front of him.

"Now, gentlemen, you can bet to a hundred pounds," said the banker; and the punters proceeded to business.

It seemed to Harvey very much like a duel, this baccarat business, as he glanced round at the hungry faces of his opponents; and an odd, disdainful smile hovered about his lips. This indication of feeling, however, was little calculated to distress his opponents, even if they noticed it, which was very improbable, for the doctor's usual ill-luck attended him, and in a very short space of time the greater portion of the bank had found its way into the pockets of the cheerful punters. Harvey was impassable; he had expected little else; but John, the grey-headed waiter, who was an ardent admirer of the doctor, probably by virtue of the extensive amount of small change that passed into his possession from the doctor's liberal hand, looked on with profound concern; the which, when we remember the scenes that he nightly witnessed unmoved, indicated a considerable display of feeling on the part of the philosophic John.

The bank was rapidly diminishing, as, deal after deal, the banker paid out on both sides, and at last the stakes on the table covered the amount remaining in the bank. But the bank won, and saved its flickering life. Only for a brief instant, thought the exultant punters, as they doubled their stakes on the next deal. But the bank won again, and the banker smiled the same odd smile of magnificent recklessness. What was it to him if he lost or won?—the world was wide, and he was beloved. And now a most extraordinary aspect came upon the game. A moment before, and the bank was on its last legs; now it could not lose. Deal after deal, and the banker displayed the higher card, and swept in the gold and notes to the rapidly increasing pile in front of him, with the same imperceptible smile, while the punters expressed their chagrin in loud-voiced astonishment. It was astounding; the banker had "struck" five times in succession, and had gathered in three hundred pounds to the heap at his right hand within ten minutes. The idlers sprang up from the *fauteuils*, and peered eagerly over the players' shoulders at the game; the turf gossip was hushed as the interest deepened; stragglers, hearing of the exciting game in

progress, dropped in from other rooms in the club, and began to bet; while the wary ones, with whom betting was the business of life, and who, by virtue of their calling, believed in the infallibility of the force they called "luck," as surely as they believed in their own existence, hung back and kept their money in their pockets. There was excitement enough to satisfy the most ardent gambler, and the punters howled and shouted to their hearts' content, as they laid their rustling bank-notes down on either side of the table, only to be swept into that big, glittering heap at the banker's side. There was only one man in the room immovable, and that was Harvey Carroll, the banker. His teeth set and his face calm and impassable, he seemed to be working out the destiny of fate, and to be figuring as a Nemesis to the hungry gamblers around him. As to the stupendous winnings at his side, they might have belonged to any man in the room rather than to him, to judge by his imperturbable aspect.

In his resolve to play for the sake of money, he seemed to have lost all relish for the customary excitement; he hardly gave the game a thought; it seemed to him as if he must win. He was doing a comparatively unholy thing for a holy purpose—unholy because it led him to belie his finer instincts; but who is there amongst us, who dares to say that he would not rather stoop to conquer than not to conquer at all?

"Banco!"

The noise of the punters was hushed, and all eyes were turned to the door, whence the challenge came.

"Banco!"

It was Sol Moses, the little millionaire, who had just entered the room and uttered this reckless challenge.

The stillness amongst the punters was unearthly, until one of them said—

"Why, there's fifteen hundred pounds in the bank, Sol!"

"All right," said the little money-lender, as cheerfully as if the amount were fifteen hundred pence; "so much the better. Now then, doctor, are you going to see it?"

"Certainly," said the unruffled banker, picking up the pack, while a murmur of admiration went round the room. Even amongst the Plungers there were not many men who would accept so coolly a challenge involving three thousand pounds on the turn of a card.

Three thousand pounds! It was still ringing in his brain. The eager punters said there were fifteen hundred pounds in the bank; this deal, if he won, would therefore give him the coveted three thousand; and if he lost—why, then *vive la bagatelle*!

Harvey dealt out the cards mechanically; to his dying day he could remember the whole scene vividly: the excited faces of the multitude of backers; the collected, urbane face of the money-lender, cigar in mouth, who for a moment of excitement could so calmly risk fifteen hundred pounds; and his own unnatural composure. He seemed in a dream, as he squeezed his cards out slowly.

The money-lender threw down his hand with a satisfied air.

"Seven! That's a fine card!" burst from the assembled crowd.

The banker displayed his card.

"Le petit!" gasped the crowd, with one hoarse shout. "*The doctor has won!*"

It was only a little dab of black ink on a bit of pasteboard, but that dab of black ink meant to Harvey Carroll the peace of mind that three thousand pounds could purchase for him and his.

"Yes," said Mr. Moses, without removing the cigar from his lips, "the doctor has won. How much do you want, doctor? Just give me a pen and ink, John."

They counted it up, and found that there were seventeen hundred odd pounds in the bank; and Sol, having written a cheque for the amount and handed it to the lucky winner, turned away, with that inexhaustible cigar of his, to discuss the prospects of the next handicap with a bloated bookmaker.

"I'll retire now, gentlemen," said the banker, pocketing his winnings.

Three thousand pounds! Yes, they were there in his breast-pocket, with four hundred pounds to the good—gold, notes, and cheques in one chaotic mass.

The punters clamoured for champagne to revive their exhausted energies, and under cover of their libations, Harvey escaped downstairs.

"Good-bye," said the gambler, as he buttoned his coat under the massive portico of the Junior Plungers; "good-bye; I have crossed your threshold for the last time in my life." And, strange to say, this time he kept his word.

He was stepping into a cab, when a wild face interposed between him and the footboard, and a trembling hand was laid on his shoulder.

"Harvey!"

It was Frank, pale and miserable, and with an unnatural gleam in his blue eyes.

The doctor grew stern as he looked upon the delinquent.

"Well?"

"Garrett said you were playing heavily, recklessly, and were winning. Have you won, Harvey? What were you playing so heavily for?"

For a moment it seemed as if the elder brother would turn away, without a word, in his anger; but this was his mother's son, and he stood still and answered in a low stern tone—

"You ask me what I was playing for. I was playing for the price of your father's peace of mind. I was playing to get back the miserable money which you have squandered so shamefully. How could you lie to me so glibly?"

"I was led away, Harvey," groaned the younger brother, "and striving then to get back that which I had lost, I lost all."

"Led away!" said the doctor disdainfully.

"Are you a child, pray? And your dear mother's house gone, lost, swallowed up in this shameful business. What will your father say? How can you face him?"

The young man turned away in a paroxysm of pain.

"Your brother, your father, and your father's father have been gamblers; but, God help me, they never did a deed which a gentleman would be ashamed to own. That distinction has been reserved for you?"

"Oh, Harvey, spare me!" implored Frank.

"Spare you?" the brother went on ruthlessly. "Have you spared us? Have you not shown me that you do not know what honour is, what

respect for your mother's memory, for your father's peace of mind is? Frank, I could have forgiven you anything but this—that any crisis in your life would make you forget to be a gentleman, to forget that you were your father's son."

"It was Eva Frothingley and Caverton, and that villain Juggleby," pleaded Frank. "And did you not take me to her house?"

"And did I not warn you times without number?" retorted the irate physician. "Have you to be for ever a child in leading strings? But enough of this. The question is, what is to be done now, with your mother's birth-place in jeopardy, and the peace of your father's life imperilled?"

"Heaven help me, I cannot tell," groaned Frank.

The doctor was bent upon giving his feeble brother a lesson that would last his lifetime, and made no haste to relieve the lad's tortured mind.

He stood looking at him quietly, measuring the extent of his grief, of his possible contrition.

"Is there no hope, Harvey; can you not get any money? Perhaps they would wait if they had some of it?"

He looked up to his brother's still face with one last look of forlorn hope. But seeing no response there the miserable boy bent his head and covered his white face with his hands.

He looked so desolate and broken-hearted, that Harvey, who loved him well, despite his frailty, could support his resolution no longer.

"God knows you deserve more punishment than I can find it in my heart to give you," he said in a low tone. "You are my mother's son, Frank, although you have done this cruel wrong!"

But the lad still remained with bowed head.

"I hope that this bitter experience will be as fruitful a lesson to you as it has been to me—for I shall never touch a card again, Frank—and that you will never in your life have further contact with this frightful soiling passion of gambling which has ruined our race. You ask me if I can get any money? Look up, my boy," he said more gently, "I have the money here. I have three thousand, four hundred pounds in my pocket!"

The boy looked up with a wild, incredulous stare. Was he dreaming? Had he heard aright?

"It is quite true," repeated Harvey, "I won it to-night at the Club."

And then, seeing the blank daze that filled the upturned face of the lad whose life's happiness he had held in a tottering balance that night during those awful hours in the card-room, he softened still more, and said in a lighter tone—

"Here, get into this cab and come home with me. You must have repented this folly, for you look fit to hang yourself. Jump in!"

And the brothers drove off together.

CHAPTER VII.

"I HAVE LIVED MY LIFE."

"Please come at once. Something terrible has happened."

It was nine o'clock in the morning—the morning after that eventful night at the club, and

Harvey was in his dressing-room when his man brought him the telegram.

It was from Grace.

"What can it be?" he thought, and he hurriedly completed his toilet. Passing into an adjoining room, he gave a glance at his brother. The boy was sleeping peacefully, a more placid forgetfulness than his troubled mind had known of late. He had had an excellent "lecturing" a few hours previous, but his mind was at rest.

Harvey swallowed a cup of coffee, gathered up the winnings of the preceding night—the three thousand pounds and odd that were to buy his brother's freedom—and jumped into a cab. What could this new surprise be? His brain was in a great whirl with sleeplessness and excitement; his life seemed now so full of sudden changes.

He found Grace looking out for him at the window eagerly, and with tear-filled eyes.

"What has happened, my dear?—what is it? Nothing——"

"Eva," sobbed the girl.

"What of her? Tell me, Grace," he said, with growing apprehension.

"She is dead, Harvey."

He went softly into the darkened room to look at the lifeless form of the woman who had loved him so well in her blind, ungovernable way. He had looked upon death so often that it had become to him a simple event in the daily round; but this death-chamber struck him with awe. A few brief hours and the dead woman lying there, so still and cold, had fronted him with the blazon of her wrath, and with the tenderness of her love; and now—she was dead. It was easy to see the cause. Her chloral and bromide bottle stood on the little table at the bedside empty—drained to the dregs. He had permitted her to take this for her constant insomnia; it was horrible that this should have come of it—this eternal sleep.

What was this? A letter addressed to himself, lying by the empty bottle. He tore it open, and read:—

"My life is indeed ended. If I could find heart to pray, it would be that I might die. I cannot live without your love, and yet death will not come, though we pray for it. I must go abroad and try to forget—to forget. My heart is breaking. Burn the enclosed. Good-bye, my best and dearest. "Eva."

The document enclosed was the ill-fated mortgage deed. The letter was sealed and addressed, as if intended for transmission. Was this misadventure? She had taken the dose so often that she could hardly increase it unknowingly.

He had driven to the house with a fierce hate in his heart; to cast at her contemptuously the price of her power, and she was dead. With a great revulsion of feeling, he sat down and sobbed for the sake of the dead woman, with his face buried in his hands. It was terrible to have been loved like this; he remembered how he had racked his heart to pieces in the old time for love of the woman who had remembered while he had forgotten.

An avalanche of recollections swept down upon him with tumultuous, bewildering force. It was indeed terrible, this passionate love.

Presently he rose and kissed the pale, cold forehead, and the most wholesome feeling that could enter his mind in the sight of the dead, whom love had wrecked, arose within him—a feeling that he had been altogether unworthy of this wealth of love, wild, ungovernable, and misdirected though it had been.

Twelve good men and true found that Eva Frothingley came to her death by misadventure, and with profound sagacity propounded some trite conclusion concerning the unguarded use of opiates, or, to put it in a plain, general way, this excellent jury said something the meaning of which they understood very little, about something else of which they understood nothing at all.

A fussy little solicitor came down and produced a will, which he read with great ceremony. It was simplicity itself; two hundred pounds a year for Grace, and the residue of her estate to her friend Harvey Carroll, M.D.

She had given him her love and her wealth; she had nought else to give but her life, and that she had—well, the jury said it was misadventure: let us hope that it was.

There was a man living down in a quiet Devonshire village in a beautiful ivy-covered retreat, whose grave, sad-looking eyes, when his mind travelled back to that cold, dead corpse, told of a different belief, and the eyes grew dreamy and more profound as they looked across the Devonshire vales, and saw in the hazy air a history of life and love in one continuous vision.

But recollection is a sweetness that ever-present Time thrusts rudely aside; and Harvey Carroll would needs awake from his dream and smile when a beautiful face would peer over his shoulder and interpose between him and the dead.

For the love that lives can live only in the present.

THE END.

VAMPIRES.

THE belief in vampires or "revenants," as they were also called, has, like the belief in witchcraft and divination, no longer any existence in the minds of rational beings. Science, with the besom of fact, is gradually sweeping away all our ancient traditions, legends, and superstitions; and even such a respectable and old-established institution as the "family ghost" is now being scientifically investigated. Soon all these "things occult" will be explained away, and gradually forgotten, except when some person of an antiquarian turn of mind climbs, at the risk of his neck, to the top shelves of some long-established library, and unearths some ancient volume, grey with the dust of many years, and redolent with that indescribable odour dear, indeed, to the nostrils of the bookworm, but usually expressed in the language of profane persons by the term "musty."

The horrors of vampirism succeeded those of witchcraft, and were still more fearful. In fact, it is scarcely possible to peruse without a shudder many of the stories related of these beings, who

are described in an official document, quoted by Horst, as dead persons who were believed to rise from their graves in the night-time, and suck the blood of the living, after which horrible feast they returned to their coffins. Even as late as the eighteenth century we read of instances of vampirism, which chiefly occurred in Hungary and other parts of Eastern Europe.

The superstition was probably brought over from Arabia and Turkey in Asia; and the vampire may be described as an improved and revised edition of the ghoul of the *Arabian Nights*; but some people consider that the real source of the superstition was derived from a tradition of the Greek Church, which alleges that persons who died under sentence of Greek excommunication resisted decomposition; while the Latin Church could not prevent those whom they excommunicated from mouldering into dust, which, according to the Greeks, was essential to the repose of the soul.

Hence, the Greek priests, from the early periods of their schism from Rome, asserted the divine authority of their bishops, which they declared was clearly manifested from the fact that their excommunication preserved the body entire and unputrified—a consummation by no means devoutly desired by the members of the Greek Church, who believed that unless the body decayed, it became the abode of an evil spirit.

The chief marks by which a vampire could be detected consisted in the flexibility of the limbs, and the fluidity of the blood. Many tales have been related of exhumed bodies which presented these appearances, from which we select the following, taken from the *Lettres Juives*:—

"In the beginning of September (1738), there died in the village of Kisilova, three leagues from Graditz, an old man, who was sixty-two years of age. Three days after he had been buried, he appeared in the night to his son, and asked him for something to eat; the son having given him something, he ate and disappeared. The next day he recounted to his neighbours what had happened. That night the father did not appear, but the following night he showed himself and asked for something to eat. They know not whether the son gave him anything or not; but the next day he was found dead in his bed. On the same day five or six persons fell suddenly ill in the village, and died one after the other in a few days.

"The officer or bailiff of the place, when informed of what had happened, sent an account of it to the tribunal of Belgrade, which despatched to the village two of these officers and an executioner, to examine into this affair. The imperial officer from whom we have this account repaired thither from Graditz, to be witness of a circumstance which he had so often heard spoken of.

"They opened the graves of those who had been dead six weeks. When they came to that of the old man, they found him with his eyes open, having a fine colour, with natural respiration, nevertheless motionless as the dead; whence they concluded that he was most evidently a vampire.

"The executioner drove a stake into his heart, they then raised a pile and reduced the corpse to ashes."

Sometimes the vampire was refractory and resisted all attempts to destroy him.

We are told of "a shepherd of the village of Blow, near the town of Kadam in Bohemia, who appeared during some time, and called certain persons, who never failed to die within eight days after.

"The peasants of Blow took up the body of this shepherd, and fixed it in the ground with a stake which they drove through it; but the man derided them for what they made him suffer, and told them they were very good to give him thus a stick to defend himself from the dogs. The same night he got up again, and by his presence alarmed several persons, and strangled more amongst them than he had hitherto done. Afterwards, they delivered him into the hands of the executioner, who put him in a cart to carry him beyond the village and there burn him. This corpse howled like a madman, and moved his feet and hands as if alive. And when they again pierced him through with stakes, he uttered very loud cries, and a great quantity of bright vermilion blood flowed from him. At last he was consumed, and this execution put an end to the appearance and hauntings of this spectre."

In Wallachia the following curious device was resorted to for the discovery of vampires. A boy was placed upon a jet black horse, which he rode all about the suspected burying-ground, and over all the graves; and when the animal stopped short, and refused, in spite of whip and spur, to set foot on any particular grave, it was a sure sign that a vampire lay within.

It has been suggested that they were examples of persons who had been buried alive, and horrible as the idea may seem, evidence has been cited which tends to confirm the suspicion. Calmet in his book *The Phantom World*, says, "It is an opinion widely spread in Germany, that certain dead persons *masticate in their graves*, and devour whatever may be close to them." Cases have been mentioned of corpses who have devoured their own flesh.

It is possible that many of these so-called vampires were unfortunate persons who had fallen into a state of catalepsy, a peculiar condition by no means uncommon, cases having occurred quite lately, notably that of George Chilcot of Wembdon, near Bridgewater, who in August last, fell into a trance which continued eight days, during which time his coffin was made, and he would have been buried alive, had not the vicar refused to allow the funeral to take place, alleging that the body was not cold enough to satisfy him that the man was actually dead. Calmet informs us that, "sometimes the interment of the bodies of suspicious persons is delayed for six or seven weeks. When they do not decay, and their limbs remain as supple and pliable as when they were alive, then *they burn them*." But such things are too horrible to dwell upon, so with one more vampire story we will bring this article to a close. The village of Liebuen being infested, a Hungarian placed himself on the top of the church tower, and just before midnight saw the well-known vampire issue from his tomb, and after divesting himself of his winding sheet, proceed on his rounds. The Hungarian, who seems to have been a brave fellow, descended and took away the linen, returning again to his post on the tower. By and

by, the vampire came back, and missing his winding sheet, got into a fearful rage, threatening the Hungarian with all manner of evil if he did not return it immediately.

The Hungarian told him to come and fetch it, upon which the vampire mounted the ladder, but was received with a blow on the head which hurled him down into the churchyard. The Hungarian then descended, and cut off his head with a hatchet; and although he was neither burnt nor impaled, the vampire disappeared and was never heard of again.

A. J. M. LIND.

A LOVE SONG.

I.

O LOVE! there's a land 'neath this sun of ours
(And its treasures are open to you and to me),
Where the earth is bright with ambrosial flowers,
And the air is throbbing with minstrelsy;
And the nightingale's song on the blossom'd bough
Still echoes the words of a whisper'd vow.

II.

It has done, sweet singer, with bygone years:
The magical sunlight of perfect bliss
Has emptied its song of the withering tears
That are part of a sorrowful world like this.
Sweet song! sweetest sunlight! Who would not haste,
With Eden in view, from this earth's dull waste?

III.

Through the livelong day is that music heard,
As it blends with the voice of the sunny sea,
And the whisper of woods by the soft winds stirr'd,
And laughter that rises, full-toned and free,
From shadowy dingle and shelter'd reach,
Like rapture o'erflowing the bounds of speech!

IV.

With splendours that live not in earthly dawns,
The young Day wakes in this Land of Delight,
And kisses the verdurous mountain-lawns,
As he smiles "Farewell!" to the waning night,
And tramples the stars with his dewy feet,
As the husbandman tramples the meadow-sweet.

V.

No gaunt Narcissus, wan, wistful-eyed,
Dare lurk on the marge of its lipping brooks,
Extended over the waveless tide,
Consumed with the love of his own sweet looks:
But, through all the brave ranks of the flow'ry throng,
Each doats on another, and waxes strong.

VI.

There roses to amorous roses turn,
 With petals out-glowing the sun-kiss'd east;
 And the tiger-lilies above them burn
 Like torches that smile on a marriage-feast;
 And pansies, whose beauty in shadow lies,
 Draw ecclase and light from each other's eyes.

VII.

There the south-wind wanders with noiseless
 tread,
 And scatters the scent of the flowers like
 spray;
 But never a petal or leaf is shed,
 Lest the earth should wax gross on the spoils of
 decay;
 And the blossoms whose fragrance his lips have
 reft
 Still swoon 'neath the odorous wealth that's left.

VIII.

And storms, at whose bidding hoarse thunders
 roll,
 Ne'er brood o'er the land with their starless
 wings
 (For passion that troubles and rends the soul,
 And the fury of tempest, are earthly things);
 But the soft white clouds as a veil are spun
 O'er the fervid face of the noontide sun.

IX.

And sweet are the nights in that favoured clime
 To lovers who lie, with enchanted limbs,
 Undreaming of death and forgetful of time;
 While above them the perfumed night-mist
 swims,
 And melts in such dews as a lover sips
 From the flower-like cup of the loved one's lips.

X.

And the moon looks down with her silver smile
 On dreamers that slumber and dreamers that
 wake;
 And the sea is like flame round the rock-girt
 isle;
 And the glow-worm shines in the thornless
 brake;
 And wonderful legions of fireflies pass,
 Like shallops of gold, o'er the billowy grass.

XI.

Shall we journey together, mine angel love,
 Now the sun has sighted his western home,
 And the wan moon sails in the heaven above
 Through clouds that are blanch'd in her wake
 like foam—
 Shall we journey together, ere seas grow dark,
 With Hope at the helm of our charmed bark?

XII.

Some unseen spirit our flight shall urge
 O'er waters white-crested and tremulous,
 Till our feet are set on the fragrant verge
 Of the land to which Hope will have guided us.
 As in dreams, let us pass from this world of
 care
 To bowers that fade not and skies more fair.

VERNON ISMAY.

NANCY'S PARTING GIFT.

BY RE. HENRY.

CHAPTER I.

THERE was a withered old crone crouching over one side of the small fire, and there was a pale young woman stitching away on the other side, and it would be difficult to decide which looked more worn and unhealthy. The room was an underground one of a dingy house in an unlovely part of London; and the room and its fittings and furniture were all unlovely. It is no use to preach the desirability of cleanliness, to say that those in the humblest station may be tidy and neat, for, as a fact, tidiness and neatness need both time and money. The poverty which lays out its dry crust upon a spotless tablecloth, and drapes its humble windows with snowy curtains, is very picturesque, but—is it possible? Certainly, if such a thing exists out of the pages of goody books and tracts, it must be in the heart of the country, far away from grime, and fog, and dirt. In London, poverty cannot be picturesque. Soap may be cheap, water may be plentiful, but the wear and tear of articles from too frequent contact with the wash-tub, without counting the time and labour which have to be expended, are considerations not lightly to be set aside. The underground room of 49, Little George Street, was no worse than a thousand such rooms where grown-up people eat and work and sleep. Nay, perhaps it was better than most, for one of the occupants was a milliner and dressmaker, and her calling compelled her to have no more dirt about than could be avoided. Not that she had fine fabrics or delicate colours on which to exercise what skill she possessed. The materials at her command were of the plainest—cheap homespun, or faded alpaca. If by chance a silk or cachemire claimed her attention, it was one which had seen better days. Not fresh from even the humble shops in the neighbourhood, but a gown that had been worn, turned, and remodelled by successive owners in various grades of society, each a little lower than the previous one. But Susan Blake was not first-rate even in her own mean little way of business. She had not the taste or skill that might have raised her several steps higher; but she was patient and plodding, and generally managed to satisfy her customers. It was her earnings that paid the rent of the poor room, and provided all the food, such as it was.

The family circle consisted of the old woman, age uncertain, supposed to be ninety; her granddaughter, Nancy Bristow; and her niece, Susan Blake, who has been already mentioned. Susan had lost both her parents at an early age, and had grown accustomed to shift and struggle for herself; and being of a thrifty, economical turn, had not had much difficulty in making both ends meet. When Nancy's father and mother died, leaving Nancy and the old woman homeless, and what was worse, nearly helpless, Susan proposed that they should throw in their lot together, and do what they could to support themselves and the old woman. The disadvantage was chiefly on Susan's

side, for while there were two more mouths to feed, there was only one more pair of hands to work, and a pair far less skilful and painstaking than her own. Susan was the breadwinner, and she knew it, and made those about her know it too; even undervaluing Nan's assistance, and taking more credit to herself than she was justly entitled to. For Nan was of some use to her. The girl never complained of the longest walks or the heaviest burdens. The freedom of the streets, squalid and dirty though they were, was more congenial to her than the atmosphere of the dingy room, and she saved her cousin many a weary journey, and the loss of many an hour's work. Susan sat at her needle from early morning till far into the night, not feeling the confinement a special hardship, though the narrow chest and drooping shoulders told their own tale of the havoc such a life was making. As long as she could keep the stuffy room free from a breath of fresh air, and could sit close enough to the fire to get a little warmth into her feet and fingers, she did not feel the want of exercise, or of change of employment.

"Nan's late to-night," said the old woman.

It was her usual remark uttered whenever her grand-daughter was absent, for she missed the girl more than she would have missed Susan, although it was to Susan she owed what necessities of life she obtained.

"Nancy is always late now. She should be sent to fetch sorrow for the time she takes of errands."

"Sorrow'll come soon enough," said the old woman sententiously.

The words had not much connection with any facts in her mind, but she had heard them some time, and they clung to her.

"Sorrow'll come to her soon enough, and disgrace too, if she don't take care," said Susan.

But the old woman, whose intellect was not equal to any continued strain, had already relapsed into her usual semi-somnolent state. From this she roused herself twice more in the course of an hour to remark that her grand-daughter was late, and would have done so a fourth time, only that the entrance of the girl herself stopped her.

Nancy was at one with her surroundings as far as poverty and unloveliness of attire went. But in her case these were accentuated by a certain attempt at finery, a smartness which was somewhat out of place. But she was stronger, healthier than her cousin, and, from the standpoint of her twenty-four years, viewed life differently from the woman who was ten years her senior. Not that Nancy was satisfied with her lot. She had fits of gloomy discontent and outbursts of passion. She was often irritable, and sometimes sulky, but these storms cleared the air, and made way for cheerful little gleams of sunshine. The sunshine was predominant as she entered the room now. She strode in, noisily humming a tune, bade her grandmother a cheerful good evening, swung off her bonnet without much regard for its dilapidated condition, and got out her work, singing all the time, in spite of the sour looks that greeted her.

"I wish you'd stop that noise, you haven't a thought for any one but yourself. You waste half your time in the streets and never care how a body's head may be aching that doesn't get a chance to smell the air."

"Why don't you smell it then? Why don't

you do some of the errands yourself? I shouldn't fret."

"And leave you to spoil the work while I'm gone, and lose me what custom I've got. Not that I should be away half the time you are; I don't get picking up acquaintance with men in the street, and walking about half the day with 'em. I'd be ashamed—a chap you know no more about than that Fred Hawkins. Why don't he get some employment, and keep out of mischief?"

"He has got employment. He sings at 'The Sun,' and makes lots of money sometimes."

"And spends it in smoke, and drink, and cards all day. A nice sort for a respectable girl. What do you suppose he wants with you?"

"He wants to marry me, but you see I ain't in such a hurry as you'd have to be. I'm only twenty-four."

"You might be only four for all the sense you've got. It's to be hoped he's going to keep you like a lady, for I don't know what you could turn your hand to."

"No, I told him I wasn't much good at earning money, and that he'd better by half make up to you, for you were that thrifty you'd got quite a little fortune put by."

"You've no call to speak good or bad of me to that man," said Susan loftily; "if I get the chance I'll give him a bit of my mind some day."

She did get the chance not many days later, for she went upstairs to answer an inquirer for her cousin who was out, and found the coarse, good-looking music-hall singer. And from the time she stayed at the door talking to him she might have given him not a bit but the whole of her mind. Any way he did not seem much crestfallen as he left the house, and she went back to her work with a deeper flush on her pale cheeks than she had often had before.

Nancy never heard of this visit, nor of others which were paid at longer or shorter intervals. But she often wondered why she did not get scolded now however long she might be gone on errands, and sometimes she noticed that the work her cousin had in hand had made very little progress during her absence.

"It's my belief Sue's got a young man," the old woman said one day to her grand-daughter; "she ain't bin half so hard and snappy lately."

"Not she," Nance answered scornfully; "more like she's found some way of saving a penny—the meals get poorer every day. We shall have to boil stones to make ourselves soup—you and I, granny."

For Susan was housekeeper, cook and general manager. Not a farthing of money passed from her own hands but what had to be amply accounted for. At first she had allowed her cousin a small salary for her share in the work, but Nancy's extravagance alarmed her. The girl never returned home without a packet of snuff or tobacco for her grandmother, a bit of cheap finery for herself, or something savoury to eke out the scanty dinner. Susan presaged from such open-handedness all sorts of evils, and ended by keeping all the earnings safe in her own possession.

The winter passed away, and with March came bright gleams of sunshine and a breath of spring during the warm hours of the day. Susan declared herself fagged to death with her long confinement in the house, and not unfrequently

went out to make the purchases necessary for her work, returning on one occasion with such bright-coloured, delicate material in her parcel as to excite Nancy's surprise.

"My! who's that for, in the name of gracious? Who's broken out in such a green as that?"

"Tisn't green, it's the new shade, all the go now. It's for Sarah Mills."

And on the green gown she forthwith began to expend a vast amount of skill and labour. Still the fashion of it pleased Nan no more than the colour had done.

"This for Sarah Mills!" she said, taking up the bodice when very near completion; "why, Sue, you've got the wrong measure somehow. This wouldn't fit a scarecrow."

Susan snatched the dress from her cousin's hand, and said peevishly—

"I haven't made any mistake; she's grown thinner than she was."

"She'd need to if she's to get into this. Don't ask me to take it home, there'll be fine grumbling."

"I'm going to take it home myself to-morrow morning," Susan answered.

The next morning, however, she dispatched her cousin on an errand which would occupy some time, and did not wait her return before starting herself. She had so big a parcel with her that the old woman woke up from her sleepy state to say—

"Why, Sue, you ain't never going to carry all that."

It was a heavy bundle, for besides the dress which she was ostensibly taking to Sarah Mills, there was a smart looking bonnet, all her own meagre stock of clothes, and the tin box which contained her savings.

"Don't trouble about me, I shall be all right," she said in answer to the old woman's query. "Good-bye, granny."

She had got into the habit of saying granny the same as Nance did, although the relation between them was really aunt and niece. Then, for the first and last time in her life, she stooped and kissed the withered, faded cheek.

Nance and her grandmother waited dinner half an hour beyond the usual time, wondering what had detained Susan. The afternoon wore on, still they wondered. Night was fast settling down over the little street when the postman, an unusual visitor in the neighbourhood, brought a solution of the mystery in the following letter:—

"DEAR NANCY,

"You'll be surprised to hear I've gone for good and all. Before you read this I shall be married. I leave you all the business, which you know has kep' us all for years, so I don't think you can say I've behaved unhandsome to you.

"Your affectionate cousin,

"SUSAN HAWKINS."

CHAPTER II.

NEARLY six years have passed, but the underground room of 49, Little George Street, seems almost unaltered. The furniture is not much worse, nor the faded strips of carpet much worn, for instead of three occupants using it day and

night, there is only one now. The old woman is dead, and Nancy lives and works alone. Her surroundings are but little altered, but in her there is a deep and lasting change. There is no sign to tell of the girl in whose veins the blood used to flow somewhat turbulently whether for good or ill. In the old times, she had been frank and quick, had possessed a nature which, under happier circumstances, might have developed into richness and beauty. But now her manner had grown hard, and cold, and unsympathetic. She had no friends, but lived a narrow, dull, joyless life, without one from whom she could ask sympathy, or whose confidence she could hope to win. To-night she is brooding over her little fire—an open letter in her hand. She has received many a letter in the same handwriting during the past year, but has deliberately destroyed each without a second reading. This one is more than usually piteous.

"Oh, Nan! if my letters ever reach you, and I can't believe but what they do, or I should get 'em back, do take pity on me. You don't know what I've bin through—me and the little ones often near starving. I helped you in the old days, you might do something for me now.

"SUSAN HAWKINS."

Not a word of contrition either in this letter or in any of the previous ones. Not a sentence to express regret for the trick she had played her cousin in taking away her lover. Not the least shame in asking a favour from one she had so cruelly injured. Just the same mean, grasping nature as of old. Nan tossed the letter impatiently aside. Nevertheless, she rose and put on her bonnet, scorning herself for her softness; sometimes pausing irresolutely, but ending by directing her steps to the address given in her cousin's letter.

It was a wretched looking room she entered. Far more wretched than the one she had just left, for here there was not even an attempt at neatness—dirt and discomfort reigned supreme. The air was heavy with stale tobacco smoke; the table was sticky with recently-spilled liquor. Two pale, sickly-looking girl babies, the eldest not two years old, sprawled about the floor, while a little boy of four put himself shyly in the corner at the visitor's approach.

Susan herself was sadly, horribly in harmony with all this squalor. The spare, precise, old-maidish little person had spread into a blowsy, untidy-looking woman. Her faded gown seemed to be fastened about her with a couple of pins; her scanty, lustreless hair hung loosely in a greasy net which was continually slipping out of place. Her manner was more peevish, more discontented than ever. She greeted Nancy with no greater embarrassment than if they had only parted yesterday and on the best of terms.

"So you've come. I begun to think you'd gone away, and I should never hear anything more of you."

"It's a pity but what I should ha' called on you after your marriage," said Nan mockingly. "It 'ud ha' bin such a pleasure to visit you and your husband. You'd made things so pleasant for me."

"Lor, Nance, you ought to be the last one to reproach me. You had ought to go down on

your bended knees and thank me, considering what I saved you from. It was for your sake I first got to know Hawkins, because I didn't want you to throw yourself away; so you may say all my misfortune's come through you."

"Oh, of course, you may say what you like," Nance retorted scornfully. "You may say it was out of kindness to me you sneaked away without a word to any one. Not a bit because you were ashamed of what you were doing."

"There, ha' done about that, Nancy. Let bygones be bygones. If I hadn't ha' done what I did, you'd be the wretchedest woman in the world to-day, just as I am."

"You've got your husband and your children. Something to live for, something to work for. You ain't a thing that might die any day, and not be more missed than a stray dog or a rat."

"Where's granny? Ain't she with you still?"

"No, but I often wish I was with her. She died four years ago."

"At any rate you don't get hard words and sour looks. You don't go about in fear of what your husband's going to do next."

"Does he beat you?"

"No, he's never lifted his hand to me."

"Well then I wonder he don't. If I were a man I'd beat any woman who kep' my home as this is kep'."

"Oh, Nancy! you're a-blaming me, and what can I do. Since that boy was born I've hardly known what it is to have a day's health. And the drag three children is on a body. Then Hawkins is ill, and his voice is nearly gone, and he hardly earns enough now to give us a wholesome meal once a week; and his cough's awful, sometimes it keeps me awake half the night."

"You! and don't it keep him awake too?"

"Well, of course. How sharp you do take one up, Nancy. But he can lie a-bed half the day if he likes."

"Why don't he try for some other employment?"

"He has tried. Sometimes he thinks if he could get away from London and work in the open air, he'd be better. He says it's the draughts, and the bad air, and the life altogether that hinders him getting well. But where's he to get such work when there's hundreds brought up for fields and gardens that can't get took on."

"Emigrate," said Nancy shortly.

"Lor, Nancy, and us without a penny, and the children not so much as a bit of boot to their foot, or a change of clothes. Nice objects we should be to emigrate."

The little boy had by this time come out of his corner, and crept closer and closer to the visitor. Perhaps her voice attracted him as a change from his mother's peevish, querulous tones. He put one dirty little paw upon her knee, and stood staring at her with solemn eyes.

"Do you want anything?" asked Nan, looking down kindly on him.

"Yes, I wants to sit on your lap a bit."

"There, Willie, don't get worritting, it's time you were a-bed."

But Nance had lifted the little fellow on to her knee, and he cuddled down seeming well satisfied with his new quarters.

"Mother ain't got no knees. She's got bones

in 'em. She says little boys don't want nurain'. Little boys does though."

He fired these sentences off at intervals, addressed to no one in particular, in a dreamy, contemplative manner.

"Should you like to come home and live along of me," asked Nancy.

"Has you got any little boys and gells?"

"No, I ain't got nobody."

"Then I'll come."

"There, that's about as much gratitude as one gets," whined Susan. "A body may wear herself to skin and bone, without so much as a thank yer. As to children—well there!"

She took up the corner of her apron and applied it to her eyes, unable to find words to express her feelings.

"Let me have this one, Sue. I'll do the best I can for him. Anyhow he won't be no worse off than with you."

"Oh, as for that nothing can be much worse for a child than to have a father who can't or won't work. I'd as lief you should have him as not. But there, Hawkins does set a lot of store by the boy, and that's a fact. I don't know that he'd ever consent. You come in some day and talk to him."

"No," said Nance sharply. "I don't want never to see him again. Perhaps if I saw him, I should repent my offer. But you tell him what I say about emigrating, and tell him I'll do all I can to help you. You just send the boy to me, and I'd see about a bit of money to start you, and clothes for you and the children."

She put the child down, and stood up excited and anxious.

"I'll try my hardest to make Hawkins listen to reason," said Sue. "I'm sure I'd as lief you had the boy. 'Three children's a terrible drag."

It was evening some six weeks later, and Nan sat in her little room mending a well-worn pair of socks. Sue had brought her the child after, she said, a terrible scene with Hawkins. But her husband's health failed almost from week to week, and the thought of fresh air, and a sea voyage, and well-paid labour in a new country had been very pleasant to him. So the boy was sleeping peacefully now in a little iron bedstead in one corner of the room, and Nancy glanced at him from time to time with a wholly new expression on her hard features. Before her task was completed this evening there was a tap at the door, and a man entered, an ill-looking man, gaunt and haggard, with smooth-shaven cheeks and a thick black moustache. His clothes though much worn were still smart-looking in a cheap, flashy way. An immense gilt pin adorned his bright blue necktie, and some tinsel rings were on his bony fingers. Altogether his attire was strongly at variance with his wasted form and dejected manner. He came towards Nance, and held out his hands.

"Don't scold me, Nan, I know you told Sue you hoped never to see me again, and you never shall see me again after to-night. The ship sails to-morrow, and we must be aboard early."

"I ain't got nothing to say to you, Fred Hawkins. If you want the child, take him, and don't trouble me any more."

"I don't want to take the child. I feel as if it was right you should have him if you liked to, but it was a hard wrench to part with him. He's just the only thing in the world I care for now."

"You'll get to care for the little girls in time," Nan said in a gentler tone.

"P'raps I may. They're their mother's children now, and girls ain't boys anyhow. But I sha'n't regret your having Willie, not if you'll look on it as a sort of make up between us. I wouldn't ha' parted with him to any one else in the world. Oh, Nan, I just cut my own throat when I give you up, and took on with Sue for the sake of her bit of money."

"There, that's all done, and I don't want to hear nothing more about it," said Nance, hard as ever when he had done speaking about the child. "P'raps it's better for me as it is. I hear you ain't such a pattern husband."

"Does Sue complain of me? Well, I won't say I don't deserve it; but she ain't the pleasantest companion for a man who's broken in health and everything. It's a loveless home, Nan, and it always will be wherever we may go."

He looked wistfully towards the little bed in the corner as he spoke.

"You may kiss him, so long as you don't wake him," Nancy said.

"No, I won't kiss him; it 'ud only make it harder to go away. But, Nan, it wasn't only to see the child I come to-night. I wanted to thank you, to tell you how sorry I'd been."

"You ain't no call to thank me, Fred Hawkins," said Nancy stiffly, "nor yet to tell me nothing."

He rose with a weary sigh, and moved towards the bed where the child was sleeping soundly. He stood looking down on him for a few minutes until the tears welled up into his eyes; and it was as much as he could do then to walk unsteadily across the room and pass out at the door without another word.

There was a good deal of bustle and confusion on board the emigrant ship that was just about to sail. Men, women, and children were standing around in a dazed, helpless sort of way, gazing on a scene which was so new to them. A few were saying good-bye to friends and giving farewell messages for those left behind. But the majority were far more concerned with the present discomfort than with thoughts of what they were leaving or what they hoped to meet with in a new country.

Through the confusion of people and packages a woman, leading a little boy by the hand, was making her way hastily. She found the object of her search after some difficulty—a little group composed of a man and a woman with a child in her arms and another clinging to her skirt. They looked as forlorn and pitiable a party as any on board, for there was neither hope nor resignation conspicuous in their faces or bearing. Nance reached them breathless with haste and excitement, and, going straight to Hawkins, she lifted the boy and put him in his father's arms.

"There! I've brought you this as a farewell present. 'Tain't right I should keep him. I knew it all along. I knew it more than ever last night. Be good to him. Be a man for his sake. There's some clothes I've bought him, and I've made it all square about his passage. Good-bye, Sue. Better luck in the New World. Good-bye. I mustn't wait; they're clearing the ship of visitors."

She turned and hurried away, but the man sprang forward, and, putting his hand on her

shoulder, whispered passionately, "God bless you, Nan."

And with these words ringing in her ears, the lonely woman sought her lonely home; while the great ship sailed away, carrying one man whose heart was lighter for the deed she had done, whose hands would work more bravely for the sake of the childish hands that clung about his neck.

"THE AFTER-GLOW."

WHEN the last red star of the sunset,
Has sunk 'neath the shifting sea,
And its golden path on the ocean
Is a thing that has ceased to be,
Then over the motionless ether,
And over the restless flow,
Comes the light that God made—and mortals
Have christened the After-Glow.

Soft skies that grow pale for a moment,
Soft clouds that grow strange with a light,
Part rose from the clasp of the sunset,
Part waned from the kisses of night;
Like love when the first flush is over
Is the stillness above and below;
And a sense of new longing and languor
Is born of the After-Glow.

The sun and the old loves have faded,
The new, like the moonlight, are cold;
And my heart is borne back on the ocean
To the graces and glories of old.
When a rose was a rose to the seeming,
'Ere time brought its weeds and its woe;
And left me all lonely to linger,
In the light of the After-Glow.

J. C. WINSCOMBE.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART III.—continued.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER II.

THE ONLY RIVAL.

JACK looked thoughtfully at Kate after her last exclamation.

"And you have a shrewd suspicion all the time that he doesn't?" he said. "Well, that's where I think the little virtues are perhaps missing. Men with scientific tastes and world-wide pursuits can't be expected to be domesticated. Perhaps he's not very affectionate, and doesn't care for family ties. I should think he doesn't; and your devotion would probably be wasted on him; it might even bore him."

"I shall not believe it," said Kate resolutely.

"He's given you every right to suppose that he doesn't care for your society. Abstract questions interest him, and women with sensitive feelings might be only in his way. Does it ever occur to you to remember that your mother was his *second* wife?"

"Yes," said Kate in a low voice; "I often think of it, and try to understand it all. The first one was not—a lady, I know; and then he married my mother, who was so fastidious!"

"Doesn't it seem to you that he must have been indifferent on important points; the women were all much the same to him, one as good as another?"

"You don't suggest pleasant things, Jack," said Kate reproachfully.

"I dare say I'm not fair. But I don't like to see you throwing away your life on an ideal that doesn't exist. It's only what I said before; your father is a great man, who doesn't want your affections in the least, who would rather put down a new mile of map than ever see his daughter again!"

"Jack, you are unkind! I never speak of him to any one but you, and you say all these cruel things of him and me."

"It's abominably selfish, I know; and my motives are of the meanest. I say your father doesn't want you, because I want you myself; and I put you down as hopelessly useless, because I should like to have the uselessness enlisted on my own behalf."

"I wish you wouldn't speak of impossible things," she replied impatiently.

"I think they are very sensible things, if you could only look at them in the true light. I've carefully explained to you all your deficiencies, and then I'm ready to assure you that I'll put up with the sum total of them. What's the good of longing for Australia, where you would be a miserable failure, when you might stay here and be a brilliant success? If the cooking went wrong, we should only have to change our servants; if the dresses didn't fit, we would send for others; if I had the bad taste to fall ill, you could get a sister from some hospital, by telegram, in a few hours, and need never show your face in the sick room. In short, if you had the common sense to marry me, your many deficiencies might go undiscovered; you might almost forget them and learn to believe in yourself. You have that air of being dissatisfied with the proceedings of other persons, and of being able to do things better if you would so condescend, which would pass you off splendidly—in a suitable situation—as a competent person. And I'd give you my word of honour to tell no one what an imposition you were."

"Oh, Jack, Jack!" said Kate with a pleasant ringing laugh, "did ever anybody persist in repeating a proposal of marriage in such a fashion as yours!"

"It's a 'declared passion,'" Jack replied gravely; "that's the term our grandfathers used. And you ought to treat my 'declared passion' with more respect. Your aunts 'favour' it, you know; and I've no doubt your father would be exceedingly glad to hand you over to me, and solve the problem in that way."

"You go too far," said Kate with a sudden change of tone; "I am proud of my father; he is

the only man in the world I care for. I will never marry so long as he is alive, and may want me."

"I may well speak ill of him," said Jack in a low voice; "he is the most dangerous rival I have."

"The only one," said Kate proudly.

They went on silently for a time; then Kate turned to her companion with an earnest look of inquiry.

"Jack," she said, "you think my father doesn't care for me, doesn't want me; do you think he would care more if he knew me?"

"That's a hard question to answer," said Jack in a low voice; "from my point of view I should say—yes; he would certainly care for you if he knew you; he couldn't help it. But then, I remember that he knew your mother—and went away without her."

Kate turned from him with a sigh, and looked at the landscape again.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST MEETING.

THEY had reached a place where the road crossed the river, and beyond the bridge a second road branched off to the right. Mechanically they pulled up their horses at this spot, and stood silent for a moment, as if it had not been decided which way they were to go.

"Shall we go round Elmrigg this morning?" Jack asked; "it's a long time since we've been that way, and you used to like it."

"Yes," Kate answered, shaking off her gravity in order to devote herself to the business of the morning; "I should like a good canter, and a breezy view. But I shall be late for lunch. I ought to have told Aunt Susie."

"I'll ride back if you like and tell her; it won't take long."

"Thank you, if you don't mind," she answered; whereupon he turned his horse's head round, and was gone in a moment.

She remained on the bridge, where the road was raised a little over the arch in ancient fashion, and the trees were so low that she could touch the branches easily with her riding whip. Beneath her the river rushed on in cool shadow over brown stones; some cows had wandered from the edge of the meadow, and stood in the clear water, just below the bridge.

A little farther on was a gate, leading to a foot-path which crossed the meadows by a straight line, and so avoided the curve of the river.

A man had for some minutes been leaning over this gate, looking at the view; he had been near enough to hear the sound of the horses' hoofs, and he had watched with interest the approaching equestrians. When Jack turned back and left Kate alone, this man rose and came towards her slowly. He was not an ordinary looking person; he was tall, of a fine figure, although he stooped a little; he had a massive head, a striking cast of features, and an abundance of iron-grey hair. He had about him the air of a stranger and a traveller, a man also unused to cities. His general manner was one of easy courage and self-possession, yet at

this moment there was something doubtful, almost anxious, in the way he looked at Kate. She, for her part, did not notice him; she was gazing up into the green foliage over her head; at intervals she amused herself by striking at a branch, and watching the leaves drop into the stream below, where they eddied round, and floated away. In doing this the third time, her whip caught in a twig for a moment, was snatched out of her hand, and then fell into the river underneath.

"How stupid of me!" she said to herself, "and Jack isn't here to get it out."

She looked over the low wall into the stream to see whether the whip was being carried away; then she glanced along the lane, and saw the stranger, who had come up and stood in the dust of the road, somewhat dusty and travel-stained himself, looking at her with hesitation.

She thought that she took him in at a glance; he was of that class to whom she was accustomed to be very courteous, the class she had heard praised as "intelligent," "respectable," "independent;" whereas the phrases of adulation for her own people were, "clever," "admirable," "generous," or "energetic." Virtues have different names as they are found in different sets; and when we praise a man for being honest, it is evident that we don't consider him an equal, or we shall have changed the adjective to honourable!

This stranger was apparently of the truly intelligent, respectable, and independent class; he was one therefore whom she need have no bashfulness about accosting.

"Oh!"—she said it as a note of recognition signifying that she perceived his presence—"perhaps you'll be so very kind as to get my whip out of the water before it is carried away."

She spoke in a clear, commanding, and withal courteous voice. Evidently she had no scruple about asking the favour, and no doubt about its being granted. He looked at her with surprise, not unmingled with admiration, for she sat well on her horse, and glanced down upon him with the air of a civilly disposed queen. Standing on the ground she would have seemed slight and girlish beside his tall and massive figure; but as it was, even her height predominated and added to the impression made by her air of haughty, yet gracious ease.

He looked at her, and knew that she was his daughter; and, without a word, he made his way to the river's brink and rescued the fallen whip.

She sat on her horse above the bridge meanwhile, looking a picture of youthful pride and beauty; she was of the age and type in which pride seems least obnoxious; it may be said that its ignorance makes its innocence. She knew so little of the world that she could be forgiven for looking at it haughtily; she still felt herself separate and distinct, with the right to judge and condemn; later on she would be bewildered by her own inconsistencies, saddened by her own failures; she would see in the weaknesses of others a reflection of her own; she would feel that she too was only one little vein through which the pulsation of humanity flowed, one with the rest, with the mass of things that she hated or despised, having only a limited power to live her own life and follow her own ideals. But she still was inexperienced enough to imagine that because she disliked whatever was

ignoble she could keep her life free from it, because she admired what was noble her life would be akin to it. Meanwhile she looked with the cruel indifference of splendid and untried intentions on those lives which were failures and compromises; perhaps also on those lives which were outside her own sphere, and so, she fancied, below her own level of opportunities.

Henry Dilworth came slowly up the bank with the whip in his hand—slowly because he wanted to prolong the time, as well as because he was tired, and at this moment discouraged. Never before had he felt so diffident and uncertain. With his wife he had been a great power and influence, even when he had failed to satisfy her; with his wife's friends he had been made to feel that there was too much of him rather than too little; that if he could have been subdued, he would have been tolerable. But he had looked in his daughter's face, and felt that to her he was nothing.

It was a strange experience, and many strange thoughts went through his mind as he came up the bank, so slowly that Kate thought to herself, with some compunction—

"Perhaps he is tired; he looks as if he had come a long way, and he is an old man; his hair is quite grey."

There was something, therefore, very graciously kind in her manner as she stooped to take the whip, and said, in the sweetest voice he had ever heard, for all its ring of imperiousness—

"I am sorry to have troubled you. Have you wetted your feet?"

He looked down at his boots absently. They were large and clumsy; the dust on them had been changed to mud by contact with the water.

"It doesn't matter; I'm used to it," he said; and his eye fell on her delicate little foot resting on the stirrup. He remembered the small and pretty feet of Agnes, but this foot was different; there was character in it, as there was character in the turn of Kate's head and the tone of her voice; this foot, though so dainty, was not helpless; it was used to going its own way, and doing its own work.

Then he raised his eyes to her face again, and looked at her sadly, and he said to himself—

"It is as Miss Leake told me; she is outside my life; she doesn't even imagine that I could have anything to do with it."

She was certainly more beautiful than he had expected; for the lovely lines of her mother's face were reflected in hers, with all the commanding style which had belonged to her aunt Kate. And her haughtiness was not shallow as the first Kate's had been; that, indeed, had never impressed Henry Dilworth much, or embarrassed him at all; it had been fitful and capricious, without foundation of character. But here, in his own daughter, he found the manner repeated with meaning behind it. There was all the graceful sweetness of his wife also; and he did not know that it was his own dignity of character, blending with those two unlike types, which shone out in his daughter's looks, and made her so impressive and unapproachable. She had done nothing so far to distinguish herself or prove her superiority in any direction; but she had a simplicity and unselfishness of purpose which inspired her with genuine

self-respect, and seemed to give her a right to hold others aloof, and to make a little solitude—a separate atmosphere, so to speak—around herself when she felt so disposed.

"Kate doesn't know her own value," Miss Leake used to say, "she is made to shine in society, and she would like to throw all her gifts away where they wouldn't be understood."

But it was precisely that capability of throwing her gifts away in a useful current that inspired with beautiful life the ornamental parts of her character and manner. These ornamental parts are apt in highly civilized societies to survive the useful life they are meant to beautify. The more important qualities get cultivated out in some carefully educated families; and it had been so to a certain degree with Miss Leake's younger sisters. Now the family type of manner had reappeared in conjunction with a strong type of character; and Henry Dilworth was for the first time in his life discouraged and made diffident, by the very force of feeling and directness of purpose which his daughter had inherited from himself. It took another form with her, and it had been led into no useful channels, rather had it been corrupted and turned astray as much as possible; but it was real enough to have all the force of truth, and was all the more impressive because it was innocent of any intention to impress. Kate was as simple in her gracious dignity to-day as her father had been in his unreserved kindness years before.

He had only spoken those few words in answer to her question, but he still stood looking at her as if he had something more to say. She thought that he was embarrassed or diffident.

"Can I be of any use to you?" she asked politely. "You are a stranger here; can I tell you the way?"

"Thank you, I know it," he answered briefly.

She looked a little surprised, but as he did not move she went on speaking.

"That is a short cut across the fields to some houses beyond the river. But it would not save you anything if you are going into the Elmdale village. You seem tired. You have come a long way perhaps?"

"I am used to walking," he said with the same brevity with which he had before spoken; it had, however, nothing discourteous in its simplicity.

"If you take that gate and go through the field you can cross the river by some stepping stones. It is pleasanter walking, perhaps; not so dusty."

He did not look round at the path she indicated. If he did not go to his daughter's home, he had no intention of passing it by.

"Thank you. I know the way," he said quietly.

"You have been here before?"

"Yes, many years ago."

He lifted his hat mechanically and moved on. It seemed to be with an effort that he took his eyes from her face, though there was nothing in his gaze that could embarrass her. The pleasant directness of his look was the same which had inspired confidence in Agnes years before; but the consciousness of power was perhaps a little dimmed, the expression of cheerfulness a little saddened.

Kate turned her head to look after him with wonder and interest; and, just as Jack reappeared

in the lane, the stranger came back and spoke to her again.

"Perhaps you can tell me whether Thomas Broadhurst still keeps the Red Cow," he said, speaking with a quiet deference, which she could not classify as "respectful," and yet which was not the manner of one who was her equal. There was in this man an indefinable mixture of humility and authority which she had not observed in any one before.

"No; he died years ago," she answered promptly; "but if you are going to the Red Cow you will be comfortable; some very nice people keep it now. Jane Clegg, who was our own housemaid, married James Dodd, and they have it. But, of course," she added, with a little smile at her own simplicity, "you do not know who these people are, nor who I am."

He fixed his eyes on hers with his singularly direct look and answered quietly, "I think so; you are Henrietta Kate Dilworth."

She flushed to the temples with surprise, as much that he should know her name as that he should utter it with such directness and without any polite prefix. There was so evidently no disrespect in his manner that she let the latter peculiarity pass without notice.

"How do you know?" she asked. "No one calls me by the first name; it was given to me after—" she hesitated, and did not finish.

"Your father," he said, and turned to go on his way.

"How do you know?" she asked again, quickly. "Are you not a stranger here? Perhaps I ought to know you."

"You have forgotten," he answered quietly.

"And you have seen me before?"

She was persistent in her questions, because she felt that this remarkable-looking man could not have passed any time in Elmdale without attracting her observation. There seemed some little mystery about him. He was like no one else, and certainly was no native production.

"I was here years ago, when you were a little child."

"And you stayed, perhaps, at the Red Cow?"

"No, I never stayed there."

But, after all, when she came to think of it, it was not wonderful that he should have heard of her, should know her name and something of her history. She was an important personage in the quiet valley, and might well be pointed out to strangers with her full designation appended. Nevertheless, her curiosity was aroused, and her interest excited.

"Perhaps my aunt would remember you, if I were to tell her your name," she suggested.

"No," he answered, in his quiet, decided way; "it isn't necessary to trouble her." And he moved on, without any hesitation this time, with the air of a man who knows where he is going to.

Jack Langford, coming back to rejoin Kate, took a long look at the traveller as he passed him. He was a significant enough figure, as, drawn now to his full height, he strode along the lonely lane with his head erect; a figure significant enough to attract attention, even if he had not made himself important by speaking to Kate.

"What a remarkable looking man!" Jack observed, when he reached his companion. He drew up his horse and remained looking after the

steadily retreating figure. "What has he been saying to you?"

"He picked my whip out of the river for me. Then he asked who lives at the Red Cow now. He is going there. It's very odd, because he looks such a stranger, but he says he has been here before; and he knew who I was, my name and everything."

"H'm," said Jack thoughtfully, and with an observant glance at her face; "it's a curious thing—does it strike you that he's like any one you know?"

"No," she answered, with quiet interest; "I didn't think so. Has it occurred to you?"

Jack lifted his eyebrows with a deprecatory glance.

"I've a vivid imagination, you know; I suppose he didn't mention his name?"

"No; he said it wasn't necessary!"

"Then you tried to find it out?"

"Yes; as he knew mine it seemed only fair."

"You got nothing by your attempt, it appears. And now for Elmrigg; if we mean to make the circuit of it we must be off; and we've a nice level bit of ground before us now."

They touched up their horses into a gallop, and said no more at that time about the stranger.

(To be continued.)

ANECDOTES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS.

THE life of a student of medicine is generally admitted to be a hard one, and so in many respects it is. But in spite of the amount of work which is now required from even the humblest aspirant to medical honours, the period of his career styled "walking the hospitals" is by no means an unhappy one. Just freed, as a rule, from the restraints of school, he is still too young to feel all the responsibilities of life, and there is, and always will exist, a sort of freedom and unconventionality in the study of his profession which can be found in no other calling. Innumerable are the stories, many little to their credit perhaps, of students' insubordination within and without their hospitals' walls. But these are not the subject of the present paper. The following anecdotes, whilst illustrating some phases of hospital life, will, however, serve to show that in development of wit and powers of repartee the medical student is little, if at all, inferior to his turbulent Irish *compère*. As a rule it is not advisable for a student to bandy words with the lecturer, or any one who may for the time being be in authority over him. The victim usually fails to appreciate the point of the joke, and later on, perhaps, the student does not exactly see where the laugh comes in. It is to be hoped that the hero of the following anecdote did not suffer afterwards for his rashness under the following circumstances. The celebrated Dr. Abernethy, who was noted for his roughness and *brusquerie*, whilst performing the duties of examiner at the College of Surgeons, once questioned a youthful but muscular aspirant for the diploma of the College, thus:—

"Mr. —, if you were present when a man was

blown up by an explosion, what would be the first thing you would do?"

"I should wait till he came down again, sir," replied the student.

"Just so," said Abernethy, entering into the spirit of the joke; "and suppose, sir, I went to kick you for the impudence of your reply, what muscles should I put in motion?"

"The flexors and extensors of my right arm, sir, as I should floor you instantly," was the reply.

"Stand down, sir," coldly rejoined the examiner. He apparently no longer continued to enter into the spirit of the joke.

Equally unsatisfactory from a professional point of view must have been the rejoinder made by a student of St. Bartholomew's Hospital during a lecture on comparative anatomy. The professor was demolishing (as he believed) Darwin and his theories—a task which he frequently engaged in—when he triumphantly wound up with the question—

"If we are monkeys, where are our tails?"

The lecturer, who had been speaking his full hour, was startled to hear in reply from one of the audience—

"We have sat on them so long that they are worn off."

That student, however, did not have so much the advantage, who, on being expostulated with by one of the demonstrators in the dissecting-room upon his idleness, honestly confessed—

"It's no use, sir; I was cut out for a loafer."

"Well," said the demonstrator, surveying the incorrigible one critically, "whoever cut you out evidently understood his business."

Nor another student of the same calibre, who when coming on the "dressing" list for the first time asked the "sister" in charge of the ward which case she considered the most dangerous one in his hands, and was met by the quick reply—

"That, sir," pointing to a pocket case of instruments he proudly, if somewhat ostentatiously, carried.

The following amusing passage of words between tutor and pupil occurred to the writer's knowledge at the London Hospital Medical College.

Mr. R—, lecturer on anatomy, eloquently holding forth to the class. Student seated in a back row, likewise eloquently holding forth to his neighbour.

Mr. R—: "I beg your pardon, Mr. —, I believe I interrupted you."

Student (unabashed): "Oh, no; not at all, sir. I had finished."

Wonderful presence of mind has been known to have been exhibited by medical students under most trying circumstances. For instance, what could be more embarrassing than the position of the young medico who was invited to a tea-fight given by the evangelical members of a total abstinence society. During the meal a suspicious-looking black bottle slipped from his pocket and fell to the floor with a loud thud.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, equal to the occasion, as he replaced it in his pocket, "I've dropped my cough mixture."

Another medical student is reported to have given as the reason why he lately failed to obtain his diploma, the fact that, being asked by the examiner to state "a common cause of mortification," he could not resist answering:—

"When you've quietly sneaked up to the 'hall,' and been plucked, and find on returning to college, that all the men know you are up."

This reply is on a par with and probably about as veracious as that alleged to have been given by another student, who ascribed his failure at the "college" to his answering the question, "Should a man fall into a well twenty feet deep, and strike his head against one of the tools with which he had been digging, what would you advise if called in?" as follows:—

"I should advise them to let the man lie, and fill up the well."

The next incident is related of a medical student hailing from north of the Tweed.

A well-known Edinburgh surgeon, who has since migrated to London, was somewhat quick-tempered if he found a student exceptionally dull in appreciating the anatomical truths imparted to him, and on one occasion, when he had been more than usually irritated by a student's density, asked him how many times he thought a fool could hear a name mentioned without remembering it?

"I dinna ken, sir," replied the student; "*how many times could ye yourself!*"

A good story also is told of a professor of chemistry in the University of Edinburgh, who was experimenting before his pupils with some combustible substances, when, as he was mixing them, they exploded, shattering the phial which he held into fragments. He raised a small piece of glass, and said very gravely—

"Gentlemen, I have made this experiment often, with this very same phial, and never knew it break in my hands before."

The following story of a young American student in Paris is worthy of preservation. He had been studying medicine at the gay capital for over a year, when he was visited by his father. He paraded the old gentleman through the city of pleasure, and pointed out to him its chief lions, architectural and otherwise. Finally, they halted before a many-pillared building.

"What place is that?" asked the parent.

"I don't know," the youth replied; "but there is a *sergeant-de-ville*, and we will soon find out."

They crossed over and put the question.

"That, *messieurs*," said the official, "is the medical school."

The last to be narrated is that of a "sweet-girl graduate," student of the London School of Medicine for Women, who, dining out once, was asked if she would take some more meat.

"No, I thank you," she said; "gastronomic satiety admonishes me that I have arrived at the ultimate stage of deglutition consistent with dietetic integrity."

It is needless to remark that she was not again asked if she would take anything more.

J. G.

THE LAST OF THE MOGHULS.

BAHADUR SHAH, the last of the descendants of Timour, who occupied the throne of Delhi—in his time, of course, a titular throne only—was, as is well known, forced by a turbulent soldiery into hostility with the British power. After the siege of his capital he fell into the hands of

Hodson, of Hodson's Horse, was subjected to a trial, and banished to Rangoon, where he died.

His natural disposition was not, however, ambitious. Gentle and indolent, he was possessed of some intellectual gifts, though he doubtless impaired them by a too habitual use of opium. He was fond of the Persian poets, and was himself a member of the numerous band of Indian imitators of their style.

As is customary in the poetical brotherhood, he took an artistic name, and the one he chose was Zuffer, or Victory. An inspection was once made of some of his poems, and a pretty thought is retained, though the exact phraseology is now forgotten. The following jingle, however, is certainly not far from the original—in purport at least, if not in form—

Sad is our fate, we learn the way to live
From the sad lessons life itself must give;
But when the training is almost complete,
Death gives the sudden signal for retreat.

It is remarkable that a similar idea was expressed by Young—"As soon as we have found the key of life, it opens the gates of death"—and may be observed, thus quoted, in George Eliot's letters. Strange that two heads should have jumped together, one under the smug wig of the Rector of Wellwyn, the other surmounted by the fast-unwinding turban of Timour.

PAUL BENISON.

LAZARUS IN LISSON GROVE.

A MEETING of the Vestry of St. Marylebone was lately held to hear an appeal against the order for the demolition of their property from the owners of houses in the neighbourhood of Lisson Grove, which had been condemned by the Medical Officer of Health as unfit for habitation. The *Standard* says:—"Some twenty-six cases of typhoid fever had occurred on the premises in question, or in their immediate vicinity, during the last month, and terrible disclosures respecting the condition of the inmates had been made a few days previously, at the inquest held on the body of one of the victims."

MOAN! moan! moan!

Husband, wife, and child!

From stricken women, despairing men,
And dying babes, that in feverous den
Lie thick as sheep in crowded pen,

Come ravings wild.

Rave! rave! rave

Until men shall mark

Staring eyeball and tossing head
Where, huddled together, living and dead,
Six wasted forms on a narrow bed

Lie parcht or stark!

Moan! moan! moan!

But your piteous cry,

Tho' men may hear, they will not heed,
Nor strive to stifle the fiendish greed
That battens and thrives on your awful need:

So ye must die!

Moan! rave! die!

Husband, wife, and child!

But ye who love to have it so,
Lies of Mammon the Merciless! know
That God will avenge this fearful woe
And anguish wild!

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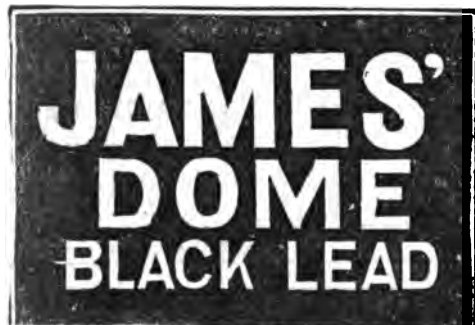
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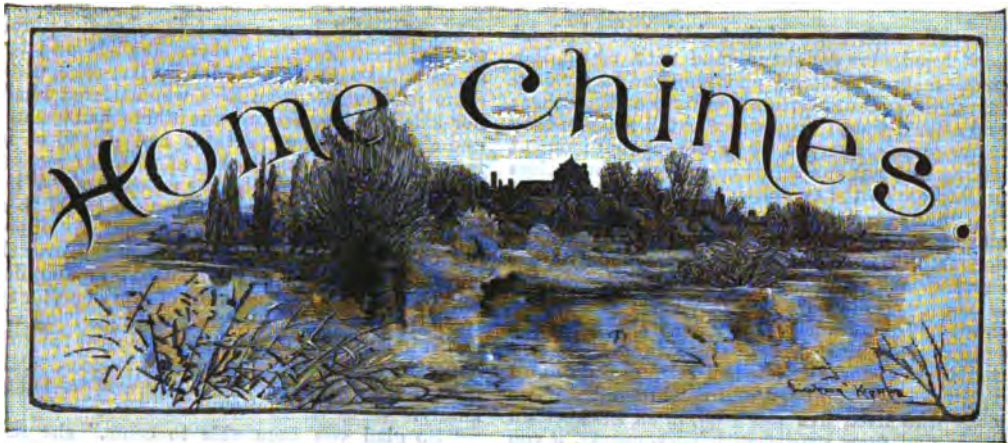
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

ELSA: AN EPISODE.

BY WALTER POWELL.

A H me, how time flies! It's twenty years since that odd little affair at the Martins: twenty years since the Carew girl threw me over for the Jew stockbroker, and nearly broke my heart; twenty years since plain flowing skirts, crinolines, and garibaldies were considered the height of fashion, four-buttoned gloves called extravagant, and flapping Leghorn hats graced the heads of our demoiselles; twenty years since my first picture was skyed in the octagon room at the Academy, and yours was turned out of the Institute. . . . You'll wonder what has reminded me of that far-away time, but when I tell you I've been looking over a bundle of old photographs, and have come upon one of Elsa Martin's, you'll wonder no longer.

By the way, did you ever hear the truth of that story? There have been many editions of it, but I can supply you with the genuine unadulterated article, so if you've nothing better to do for ten minutes, listen to me.

Do you remember meeting her? She was old Martin's niece, you know, a queer, clever, bright creature, infamously brought up, with a terrible temper, and an ill-balanced mind always in extremes. She loathed a person on Tuesday, and adored him on Wednesday; hoped her uncle would end his days in prison one moment, wished her aunt was dead the next, and spoke of them both with the greatest affection half an hour after. But in spite of her flippant talk there was something very attractive and uncommon about her, and in '65 she had more than one attentive swain, among whom she did not reckon me, however, for I was always more or less afraid of her spitfire tongue, and never really liked her since I once overheard her describing one of my best pictures, for which A—— gave me £500: — my "Mariana," by all that's sacred—as vilely drawn, and infamously coloured. Not that *she* knew, of

course, and who cared what she said, yet these things rankle even from a bad-tempered ignoramus.

I was wandering down Bond Street towards the end of July that year, when whom should I see gazing into the jeweller's windows but old Martin himself who pounced upon me with delight, he was so glad to meet a friend, and insisted on my accompanying him back to his Westmoreland place for a fortnight's holiday.

"You are working too hard, my boy," he said. "Rest will do you good. Bring your paint-pots with you, if you like, and sketch the house, its a pretty place, or my dachshund, or, my wife, whichever you prefer, I value all three equally."

If only Mrs. Martin could have heard her spouse she would not have believed her ears. I told him how glad I should be to return with him, for deadly is town when one is left alone in the heat and rattle of cabs. So off we went the next day, and with my usual luck (I was tremendously lucky then, from *lansquenel* downwards) I found Mabel Carew sitting under the big trees on the lawn at the Hall, with Tennyson on her lap, innocence beaming in her face, and magenta ribbons fluttering over her white gown. To the ringing of the croquet bell, and the banging of the croquet balls, with occasional shouts of "Blue, where are you, bother you." "Now yellow, try and get through *this* time" rending the air like a Greek chorus, she hastened to assure me how very glad she was to see me again; it seemed a year since she had left London; she didn't know why—and then I fancy those accomplished brown orbs filled with tears. In all my varied experiences I've found brown eyes beat blue ones hollow any day in the week for lying and deceit. You literally can't believe a word they say, if such an expression is allowable.

Well, we arranged ourselves cosily in wicker chairs and began to talk, settling first of all that the Carruthers' ball was a perfectly delightful one—it had taken place the day before she and her people had flown from Curzon Street—and that it was a great pity the Princesses hadn't turned up

after all, with more of that shibboleth which all good Londoners delight in, and with which, if a couple met unexpectedly on Greenland's icy mountains, they would certainly entertain each other; and after a time I begged her to tell me about my fellow-guests, many of whom were at that moment baking in a hot sun before us, enjoying themselves mightily with the everlasting mallet warfare, and the equally everlasting bowls. Miss Carew supplied all the information required, and said the most delightfully vicious things of everyone with the sweetest smile, and the most charming intonation of voice. There were the inevitable curate and shrewd, hard-headed old maid, she said, the squire's daughter, dressed—ah! how Piccadilly would have stared if she had taken a walk down it in that nankeen garb, and mushroom hat; two louts who lived five miles off, in an Elizabethan house, and grew scarlet with nervousness, if you glanced in their direction; the couple we know now as Mr. and Mrs. Pomsonby Tompkins in full force as usual—where *ain't* they?—and the usual number of horsey and doggy young men and maidens from all parts of the country.

In those days, thank Heaven, we were spared the cultured youth, and the staysless damsel, who talk art at breakfast (with *pinces nez* on their noses), religion at luncheon, literature at dinner, and a hash of all three during other parts of the day. Very few of us were cultivated enough to soar into such high-falutin' regions, but remained below in a more congenial atmosphere, composed mainly of flirtation, jokes, and gossip, and with that we were fain to be content, leaving Shakespeare and the musical glasses to older and more learned folk who had a reputation to keep up. Now I feel out of it even in a discussion about pictures, for tender youth of either sex know far more about everything, and particularly about my calling, than I shall ever do; but this is digressing.

Of course there were a pair of "invisible" girls (as Mrs. Haweis aptly calls them) staying at the Hall, robed in that detestable stuff called brown holland, which is only fit for tying up chandeliers with, and which has happily "gone out" with *piqués*, and other stiff monstrosities.

"No one ever pays them the least attention," sighed Mabel in a low tender tone, "and their chief, and indeed only attribute, is that they are always down first in the morning, and say, 'Amen' very loud to the prayers. No one has been interested enough in them to ask their names, and we don't know how long they've been here. They never speak, are utterly stupid at every game, and wear black grenadines, jet ornaments, and mittens at dinner."

Equally of course there were a few soldiers, among whom I recognised that detestable cad McGregor (who has since been killed out steep-chasing) and Dandy Sylvester, who was at Harrow with me, and was a really good little fellow, but didactic and argumentary. Both these men had danced round Miss Martin all the season, and both were now busy advising her as to the most practical way of getting through a hoop.

"Captain Sylvester is very infatuated," murmured Mabel. "I can't tell why, for dear Elsa is not very sweet tempered, and will have no money, so people say. She has always been quite nice to me, except once or twice, when I daresay it was as much my fault as hers."

We were still deep in our talk, when the player stopped their game, and threw mallets and ball about midst a hurricane of awful language, which came particularly from Elsa, who declared loudly her side had lost because the others had cheated, and also because her partners had played so infamously. Every one looked at us, and I received from Miss Martin the chilling welcome of "When did *you* come? I had no notion *you'd* been asked." However, when tea came out, it softened her asperities, and she grew quite amusing over the cups and saucers which she insisted on manipulating (to the manifest discomfort of every one, for the people who took sugar were given none, and *vice versa*) in spite of the arrival of her aunt from the house to attend to her duties as hostess. Mrs. Martin was always well mannered, and greeted me kindly.

"So glad you were able to come," she said. "Elsa, dear child, don't give the cats *all* the cream" (three immense Persians were amongst Elsa's many pets). "I hope you will amuse yourself here. Did you go to Goodwood? Are you yachting at all this year?" &c. &c.

With a woman of that sort one listens and answers mechanically; and while she and I were addressing politenesses to each other I had my ears and eyes open, and heard Mabel laugh more frequently at the witticisms of the curate than the occasion quite warranted (her laugh was one of her deadliest weapons. Was she trying to captivate him? I thought), and saw that Elsa's manner to Sylvester was making McGregor mad with jealousy.

Loitering about the conservatories before dinner, I met Elsa with some heliotrope in her hand, which flower graced Sylvester's button-hole shortly after; I saw the grenardined and jettied couple furtively pick choice roses to adorn themselves withal; and I had Mabel to myself for five precious minutes, during which I reproached her with her curate conquest; and she asked me, with her most innocent and sweet expression, what on earth I meant?

Ah! I too have been in Arcady, and the pleasure was worth the subsequent pain. All those exquisite summer days—really *hot*, as it used to be twenty years ago—fled far too quickly; and, looking back at that time, it seems like a dream—a dream in which one never wanted to eat or to sleep, to ride or to drive, but in which supreme happiness consisted in wandering about the park for hours with Mabel; in feeding her with currants in the kitchen-garden; in pinning sweet-peas on her lace ties. How pretty she was then! No one is half so pretty now-a-days! Every morning I made up my mind the sun should not set before I asked my love to share my rooms in Newman Street, the allowance from my father, and the fame that was coming to me; but then, again, I felt so *sure* of her, that I would not hurry over the delightfulness of a courtship. Taking her altogether, she was the most fascinating girl I ever met, bar none. She used to ask my advice confidentially on every possible and impossible question; took the greatest interest in my work—What had I done; what was I doing?—possessed that tremendous gift of sympathy, which, to my mind, is the most alluring charm a woman can have; and, in short, was the embodiment of every female grace and

virtue. I know he now to have been a rank little hypocrite; but then—well, it's no use bothering you with all this.

In spite of having much to occupy me with my own little affair, I kept a sharp look out on Miss Elsa, whose manner with Sylvester I thought a great improvement on her ordinary one with men. She hardly ever contradicted him; never croquetted his ball to the outrageous distances she did other people's, or insisted on his taking idiotic parts in our nightly games or charades—three special marks of her favour. In short, she was rapidly reducing him to the verge of as much spooniness as the sensible fellow was capable of, and McGregor was evidently mad with jealousy.

What the latter wanted the girl for I can't imagine, for he couldn't have known the meaning of the word Love; and indeed I've come to the conclusion that ninety-nine people out of a hundred go into their graves without experiencing the fatal passion. Cupid taps them on the shoulder, as Rosalind says, but beyond that they never become acquainted with the blind god.

Amongst other little peculiarities, Elsa was desperately irreligious, and everybody was astonished when she announced her intention of coming to church the first Sunday I was at the Hall instead of lounging about the lawn frightening the peacocks. What was more extraordinary still, no saint could have sung the hymns in a more reverent fashion than she, or have joined in the prayers more heartily, and she absolutely refrained from criticising the sermon, too, or calling the curate a "duffer" as we came out. Several enterprising members, including Elsa, elected to travel home through the hot, dusty lanes instead of driving, and I can see now her defiant little face, with a fierce frown gathering between her sparks of eyes, because some one mildly suggested she would tire herself.

"Don't be a fool, pray," she replied brusquely. "I mean to walk;" so off she went with her faithful soldier by her side, and McGregor not far behind, with that horrid Beecham woman, who kicked over the traces not many months after, and bolted from Sir John with a play-actor.

McGregor came in, morose as usual, to luncheon, in spite of the Beecham's wiles, but Elsa was radiant, and Sylvester very nervous, with a "Don't-chaff-me, old fellow," expression; so it didn't require a prophet to find out what had happened.

"Accepted?" said Mabel, as we scattered about the verandah. "Of course she has accepted him, and she'll make him quite as good a wife as he deserves. But I am almost sure she liked that Major Longmore, who went out to India last October, far too much for her peace of mind."

Everything went delightfully for a few days, and then storms arose. Our young lady having got what she wanted, tired of her toy in a short enough time; and Sylvester, hot-tempered and exacting, was perpetually saying the wrong thing at the wrong moment. The sight of a magnificent diamond ring, sent for from Streeter's, patched up matters for a bit, but the evening of the day it arrived, Mabel (who told me), saw Elsa pull it off her finger, and throw it at Sylvester's feet, because

he told her to come off the grass, it was getting damp! I pitied him heartily when I heard it, thinking what a fiend he had secured as his future wife, while I was on the verge of being betrothed to an angel.

We were all at sixes and sevens that night at dinner, what with Sylvester maintaining a haughty silence, and Elsa getting up a feverish flirtation with McGregor, and Lady Beecham making eyes at our host, which nearly drove our hostess frantic, and Mabel, to make matters worse, talked entirely to the curate, asking his advice as to taking a district in town! That banquet seemed hours long, and no one wanted to do anything afterwards, declared they were sleepy, or had letters to write, and would go to bed early. I alone of all the party voted myself wide awake, and not nearly ready for retiring, but no one would remain up with me.

"Be sure you put out the lights as you go upstairs," said old Martin, who had numerous fidgety ways. "The servants go to bed at twelve. Want nothing? Good night, then."

And I was left in the smoking-room while the others, lazy, bad-tempered, dissatisfied, streamed off. First of all I smoked a cigarette and thought of Mabel; then I tried to read, and threw the book away with an impatient sigh (for I was in that state when one can do nothing for hours quite comfortably), and then I began to write some verses which I meant to send as soon as finished to a magazine, I had not made up my mind which. I never was much good at that sort of thing, and I was so certain that these were excellent that I am sure now they must have been very bad. I dedicated them "To Her," I remember, and then began—

"My darling love, you're all the world to me."

At first I thought I'd make them blank verse; that's such easy stuff, no trouble about that you know, no rhymes required, which is the chief nuisance in making poetry; but then again I thought it was stupid to shirk the tags, so I began as one does in dumb crambo, taking "me" for instance for the word, and running through the alphabet beginning at "be." (Is that Brown-ing's way, I wonder, and does he count his "feet" as I did on my fingers?) At the third verse I found I was getting on swimmingly, but growing sleepy, so I turned out the lamps according to my host's directions, and went into the hall, and up the staircase, putting out the gas as I went along. Just as I reached the left corridor—do you know the house?—I heard a slight noise at the far end of it, and looking down, in the dim light I saw something being dragged rapidly across, something that looked like a man in evening clothes, and singularly like Sylvester, being pulled and pushed by another figure, whether man or woman, I couldn't tell. The two vanished into a room close by them, the door was shut softly, and I saw no more. Now, I am by nature phlegmatic, and utterly unimaginative, and that night I was blind with sleep. "Drunk," I murmured to myself, "they've been having more brandies and sodas," and then I put the house in darkness, and retiring to my apartment slept the sleep of the just with the name of Mabel on my lips and in my heart.

As the man was drawing up the blinds the next morning he began to cough, a sure sign he wished to tell me something. He was a bit of a bore, but I was always good-natured, so I said, "Well, Pierce, a fine day?"

"Yes, sir, very," he answered. "But we are all in great distress, sir. Poor Captain Sylvester has been found dead in his bed, sir."

Gad, how he made me jump! I had been idly and dreamily looking at some water-colour drawings that were hanging opposite my bed (very bad they were, too, executed, I am sure, by Mrs. Martin in her school days), and though I hadn't meant to get up for the next half hour, the shock made me leap on to the floor.

"Dead!" I said, sincerely grieved for the poor little fellow, and thinking, will Elsa be sorry for the unkindness of the last few days?

"Yes, sir, dead. A telegram came for him just after all the gentlemen went upstairs last night. His man says its in his 'and now. They've sent for the doctor to see what he died of, sir. We in the 'all think it was 'eart."

Then the shadowy scene of the night before flashed on my memory. Could it have been Sylvester? If so, *who* was with him? I dressed as quickly as I could, and went downstairs, to find every one miserable, the host and hostess not to be seen, and Mabel nowhere. I made up my mind not to say a word to increase the general wretchedness till I saw how things turned out, and if any one acknowledged to seeing the dead man after he had gone to his room last night. Those I spoke to, including McGregor, seemed dreadfully sorry, and indeed the latter spoke so generously, I was quite touched. The local apothecary came, and pronounced it to have been an attack of *angina pectoris*, signing a certificate to that effect. An uncle fetched the poor dead fellow's body away that day—he had no near relations—and the house was at once emptied of the laughing uproarious guests who had made it such a cheerful abode for the last fortnight, Mr. and Mrs. Martin and Elsa being left to get over the shock as they best might.

I saw Mabel as far as Carlisle, and on our way thither I thought, "Shall I tell her about last night?" and then again I made up my mind I was too sleepy to have seen clearly, and that no good could come of worrying her. We were so down-hearted at the sudden termination of our pleasant time, and the horrid cause of it, that I felt it would cheer us both if I proposed, which I did in due form, and was accepted. In the seventh heaven of delight I put one of my rings on her third finger, and heard her call me by my Christian name, and declare she never loved till now—we all say that—and Carlisle came so quickly, where I had to branch off to Glasgow, and she to go on to Edinburgh, and when her train left I felt as if I should die. However, the grouse shooting in Argyshire was excellent that year, we had some jolly people in the house, and I heard from Mabel every other day for a fortnight.

About three weeks after my proposal I got a letter from her sending back my *gages d'amour*, and telling me not to think ill of her, but her people had insisted on her accepting a man whom she had met at Inverness. "I can never love any one but you," she said, "never, never" (I've got

the note somewhere, and I remember the exact spot I read it in first), "but I am the eldest of a large family, and must help them. God bless you. Forget me, forgive me. I am to be married in November." I wrote her rather a neat answer, I flatter myself, but I was cut up, and no mistake, could not shoot straight, and hated my fellow-creatures, so thinking a change would do me good, I took a clean canvas and a sheaf of brushes to a charming inn at Bowness, and began devoting myself to lake scenery, as love had thrown me over.

At Bowness who should I see listlessly walking about, but Elsa Martin, quite alone, except for her collie. She looked ill and worried, and wore a black and white cotton gown, in memory, I thought, of poor Sylvester. She stopped when I spoke to her, and at first hardly seemed to know me. All the fire, the diablerie had gone out of her eyes, and her face looked pinched and wan. She and her uncle and aunt, she said, had a house on the Ambleside Road. Would I come to see them? Yes, she had been ill, but she was better, and, and, was it not a pretty place?

I saw a good deal of her after that. We used to row on the lake—she could row fairly—and often she sat near me and read to me while I sketched under my white umbrella in the fields, and she read very well, particularly *The Idylls of the King*, to which I have a great attachment. I never mentioned Sylvester, as I thought it might upset her, but one evening, when the moon was shining (how many stupid actions the moon inspires in one, by the way) and we were sitting alone on the balcony of her house, she said suddenly:

"Do you ever think of him? I do, so often."

A good deal put out of countenance I could say nothing better than—

"Ah, I was so sorry for you."

Then, as she didn't speak, I went on,

"I want to tell you something I've never mentioned to another soul;" and in a few words I described to her what I thought I saw that night.

She wasn't surprised, only quite silent. A boat, in which a girl was singing charmingly, drifted past our windows; a child, with a fiddle, struck up a plaintive air on the road between us and the lake, and a falling star shot across the sky.

Us n'est qu'une étoile qui file, file, file, et disparaît," said Elsa, in her pretty French (she was at school in Paris, where they called her *La Belle Diablesse*) and then again she was silent, and the fiddle changed its plaintive air to a martial note, and now it was "The March of the Men of Harlech" that was making us feel life was worth living—in the moonlight at Bowness.

"I've liked you so much better than I ever did before, since I've seen you here," began Elsa suddenly in her rough candid fashion, "that I am going to tell you a secret, something I've not even told my aunt. I should never have mentioned it, but what you saw that night happens to be the end of my story, so you may well know the beginning. I hadn't got on very well with Regie since he proposed:—you would not have noticed it, you were so much taken up then with Mabel Carew (did you know she was secretly engaged to the curate all the time?) He annoyed me often, couldn't see a joke, and was odious, poor thing,

when he was jealous, so that at last I made up my mind I didn't want him at all, and didn't care a straw for him. I think when I was made they left out my heart. I am twenty-three and I never loved anyone half as well as myself, except for a few hours. Well, I broke it off entirely with him in the morning room just before we went to bed that night, and really felt quite pleased and unfettered when I had done it. He cared, I am sure—but that sort of feeling never lasts long with you men. You remember how early we “retired” (as my aunt would say), and how cross and disagreeable everyone was. I didn't undress when I got to my room, but sat by the window thinking of all sorts of things, and principally I wished I hadn't such a bad temper, and that I could marry a man who wouldn't bore me, when suddenly I heard a gentle tap at the door. I thought it might be one of the maids so I unlocked it—I am a coward, and being always afraid of burglars lock myself in—to find Regie, looking horribly ill, with a telegram in his hand.

“This has just come,” he said very softly. “It is to order me to join at once, as the regiment is going out to India. Forgive me, dearest, but as I shall start at eight to-morrow, I knew I should not see you again, and I wanted to ask you to reconsider your decision, and to take back my ring. I daren't trust to a letter, I wanted to see you myself.”

I forget what I said exactly, but I let him know I didn't love him, and never should, and that it was better he should know the truth.

I had hardly got the words out, when he gave a sort of gasp, and with a horrible thud he fell at my feet. Oh God, I shall never forget the terror of that moment! I thought in my ignorance he was fainting, but I didn't know what to do even in a simple case like that; then I thought I would drag him to his room, which I knew wasn't far from mine, so I pulled and dragged him the best way I could—I never saw you—across the corridor, and on to his bed. I unloosed his tie and collar, I thought I never, should get it undone—dashed water in his face, and rang for his man—going back to my bedroom, as I felt sure he would be properly attended to. I never thought of my uncle's order that all the servants should go to bed at twelve; it was past that, and no one went near him, but I didn't know, and slept peacefully, feeling sure, as I said, that it was nothing but a womanish faint. When they told me the next morning I felt like a murderess. If it had not been for my prudery, which prevented my attending properly to him, and not leaving him till he recovered, it would have been all right. When the doctor declared it was heart, and that nothing could have saved him I was comparatively relieved. . . but I! I was the cause of it all! I can't pretend I loved him, yet I shall never forget him all my life.”

The fiddle sang “Adelaide” in a minor key, and the child begged for pennies from our balcony.

The other day Mabel's eldest daughter Miss Goldstücker, married some swell, high up in the diplomatic service. I was there, for Mabel always remembers her old friends, you know, and never let me quarrel with her, from a coquettish feeling chiefly, of wishing to keep her slaves about her. Next to me, sat Elsa, now Lady Dormer. Beyond being as grey as a badger, she is little

altered; the sharp lines round her mouth are deeper than they were in '65, but the sweetness of her eyes contradicts in a great measure the harsh expression of her lips. I expect she leads Lord Dormer a dance—indeed I know she does—and I often wonder if she would have been happier with poor Dandy, who would have ruled her with a rod of iron. Heaven knows. It's a queer world, my boy, and I for one shan't be grieved when I've done with it.

IDLE THOUGHTS.

BY AN IDLE FELLOW.

ON VANITY AND VANITIES.

ALL is vanity, and everybody's vain. Women are terribly vain. So are men—more so, if possible. So are children, particularly children. One of them, at this very moment, is hammering upon my legs. She wants to know what I think of her new shoes. Candidly, I don't think much of them. They lack symmetry and curve, and possess an indescribable appearance of floppiness (I believe, too, they've put them on the wrong feet). But I don't say this. It is not criticism, but flattery that she wants; and I gush over them with what I feel to myself to be exaggerated effusiveness. Nothing else would satisfy this self-opinionated cherub. I tried the conscientious friend dodge with her on one occasion, but it was not a success. She had requested my judgment upon her general conduct and behaviour, the exact case submitted being, “Wot oo tink of me? Oo peased wi' me?” and I had thought it a good opportunity to make a few salutary remarks upon her late moral career, and said: “No, I am not pleased with you.” I recalled to her mind the events of that very morning, and I put it to her how she, as a Christian child, could expect a wise and good uncle to be satisfied with the carryings on of an infant who that very day had roused the whole house at 5 A.M.; had upset a water jug and tumbled down stairs after it at 7; had endeavoured to put the cat in the bath at 8; and sat on her own father's hat at 9.35.

What did she do? Was she grateful to me for my plain speaking? Did she ponder upon my words, and determine to profit by them, and to lead, from that hour, a better and a nobler life?

No! she howled.

That done, she became abusive. She said—

“Oo naughty—oo naughty, bad unkie—oo bad man—me tell MAR.”

And she did, too.

Since then, when my views have been called for, I have kept my real sentiments more to myself like, preferring to express unbounded admiration of this young person's actions irrespective of their actual merits. And she nods her head approvingly, and trots off to advertise my opinion to the rest of the household. She appears to employ it as a sort of testimonial for mercenary purposes, for I subsequently hear distant sounds of “Unkie says me uood dirl—me dot to have two bikkies.”

There she goes, now, gazing rapturously at her own toes, and murmuring “pittie”—two-foot-ten of

conceit and vanity; to say nothing of other wickednesses.

They are all alike. I remember sitting in a garden one sunny afternoon in the suburbs of London. Suddenly, I heard a shrill, treble voice calling from a top storey window to some unseen being, presumably in one of the other gardens, "Gamma, me dood boy, me wery dood boy; gamma, me dot on Bob's knickie-bockies."

Why even animals are vain. I saw a great Newfoundland dog, the other day, sitting in front of a mirror at the entrance to a shop in Regent Circus, and examining himself with an amount of smug satisfaction that I have never seen equalled elsewhere outside a vestry meeting.

I was at a farmhouse once, when some high holiday was being celebrated. I don't remember what the occasion was, but it was something festive, a May-day or Quarter-day, or something of that sort, and they put a garland of flowers round the head of one of the cows. Well that absurd quadruped went about all day as perky as a school-girl in a new frock; and when they took the wreath off, she became quite sulky, and they had to put it on again before she would stand still to be milked. This is not a Percy anecdote. It is plain, sober truth.

As for cats, they nearly equal human beings for vanity. I have known a cat get up and walk out of the room, on a remark derogatory to her species being made by a visitor, while a neatly turned compliment will set them purring for an hour.

I do like cats. They are so unconsciously amusing. There is such a comic dignity about them, such an "How dare you!" "Go away, don't touch me" sort of air. Now there is nothing haughty about a dog. They are "Hail, fellow, well met" with every Tom, Dick, or Harry that they come across. When I meet a dog of my acquaintance, I slap his head, call him opprobrious epithets, and roll him over on his back; and there he lies, gaping at me, and doesn't mind it a bit.

Fancy carrying on like that with a cat! Why, she would never speak to you again as long as you lived. No, when you want to win the approbation of a cat you must mind what you are about, and work your way carefully. If you don't know the cat, you had best begin by saying, "poor pussy." After which, add, "did 'ums," in a tone of soothing sympathy. You don't know what you mean, any more than the cat does, but the sentiment seems to imply a proper spirit on your part, and generally touches her feelings to such an extent that, if you are of good manners and passable appearance, she will stick her back up and rub her nose against you. Matters having reached this stage, you may venture to chuck her under the chin, and tickle the side of her head, and the intelligent creature will then stick her claws into your legs; and all is friendship and affection, as so sweetly expressed in the beautiful lines—

I love little Pussy, her coat is so warm,
And, if I don't tease her, she'll do me no harm;
So I'll stroke her, and pat her, and feed her with food,
And Pussy will love me because I am good.

The last two lines of the stanza give us a pretty true insight into pussy's notions of human goodness. It is evident that in her opinion goodness

consists of stroking her, and patting her, and feeding her with food. I fear this narrow-minded view of virtue, though, is not confined to pussies. We are all inclined to adopt a similar standard of merit in our estimate of other people. A good man is a man who is good to us, and a bad man is a man who doesn't do what we want him to. The truth is, we each of us have an inborn conviction that the whole world, with everybody and everything in it, was created as a sort of necessary appendage to ourselves. Our fellow men and women were made to admire us, and to minister to our various requirements. You and I, dear reader, are each the centre of the universe in our respective opinions. You, as I understand it, were brought into being by a considerate Providence in order that you might read and pay me for what I write; while I, in your opinion, am an article sent into the world to write something for you to read. The stars—as we term the myriad other worlds that are rushing down beside us through the eternal silence—were put in the heavens to make the sky look interesting for us at night. And the moon, with its dark mysteries and ever hidden face, is an arrangement for us to flirt under.

I fear we are most of us like Mrs. Poyser's bantam cock, who fancied the sun got up every morning to hear him crow. 'Tis vanity that makes the world go round. I don't believe any man ever existed without vanity, and, if he did, he would be an extremely uncomfortable person to have anything to do with. He would, of course, be a very good man, and we should respect him very much. He would be a very admirable man—a man to be put under a glass case, and shown round as a specimen—a man to be stuck upon a pedestal, and copied, like a school exercise—a man to be revered; but not a man to be loved, not a human brother whose hand we should care to grip. Angels may be very excellent sort of folk in their way, but we poor mortals, in our present state, would probably find them very slow company. Even mere extra goody people most of us find rather depressing. It is in our faults and failings, not in our virtues, that we touch one another, and find sympathy. We differ widely enough in our nobler qualities. It is in our follies that we are at one. Some of us are pious, some of us are generous. Some few of us are honest, comparatively speaking; and some, fewer still, may, possibly, be truthful. But in vanity and kindred weaknesses we can all join hands. Vanity is one of those touches of Nature that make the whole world kin. From the Indian hunter, proud of his belt of scalps, to the European general, swelling beneath his row of stars and medals; from the Chinese, gleeful at the length of his pigtail, to the "professional beauty," suffering tortures in order that her waist may resemble a peg-top; from draggled little Polly Stiggins, strutting through Seven Dials with a tattered parasol over her head, to the princess, sweeping through a drawing-room, with a train of four yards long; from Arry, winning by vulgar chaff the loud laughter of his pals, to the statesman, whose ears are tickled by the cheers that greet his high-sounding periods; from the dark-skinned African, bartering his precious oils and ivory for a few glass beads to hang about his neck, to the Christian maiden, selling her white body and fresh soul

for a score of tiny stones and an empty title to tack before her name—all march, and fight, and bleed, and die beneath its tawdry flag.

Ay, ay, vanity is truly enough the motive-power that moves Humanity, and it is flattery that greases the wheels. If you want to win affection and respect in this world, you must flatter people. Flatter high, and low, and rich, and poor, and silly, and wise. You will get on famously. Praise this man's virtues and that man's vices. Compliment everybody upon everything, and especially upon what they haven't got. Admire guys for their beauty, fools for their wit, and boors for their breeding. Your discernment and intelligence will be extolled to the skies.

Every one can be got over by flattery. The belted earl—"belted earl" is the correct phrase, I believe. I don't know what it means, unless it be an earl that wears a belt instead of braces. Some men do. I don't like it myself. You have to keep the thing so tight, for it to be of any use, and that is uncomfortable. Anyhow, whatever particular kind of an earl a belted earl may be, he is, I assert, get-overable by flattery; just as every other human being is, from a duchess to a cat's-meat man, from a plough-boy to a poet—and the poet far easier than the plough-boy, for butter can be better spread on wheaten bread than on oaten cakes.

As for love, flattery is its very life blood. Fill a person with love for themselves, and what runs over will be your share, says a certain witty and truthful Frenchman, whose name I can't for the life of me remember. (Confound it, I never can remember names when I want.) Tell a girl she is an angel, only more angelic than an angel; that she is a goddess, only more graceful, queenly, and heavenly than the average goddess; that she is more fairy-like than Titania, more beautiful than Venus, more enchanting than Parthenopë; more adorable, lovely, and radiant, in short, than any other woman that ever did live, does live, or could live, and you will make a very favourable impression on her trusting little heart. Sweet innocent! she will believe every word you say. It is so easy to deceive a woman—in this way.

Dear little souls, they hate flattery, so they tell you; and, when you say, "Ah, darling, it isn't flattery in your case, it's plain, sober truth; you really are, without exaggeration, the most beautiful, the most good, the most charming, the most divine, the most perfect human creature that ever trod this earth," they will smile, a quiet, approving smile, and, leaning against your manly shoulder, murmur that you are a dear good fellow after all.

By Jove, fancy a man trying to make love on strictly truthful principles, determining never to utter a word of mere compliment or hyperbole, but to scrupulously confine himself to exact fact! Fancy his gazing rapturously into his mistress' eyes, and whispering softly to her that she wasn't, on the whole, bad looking, as girls went! Fancy his holding up her little hand, and assuring her that it was of a light drab colour, shot with red; and telling her, as he pressed her to his heart, that her nose, for a turned-up one, seemed rather pretty; and that her eyes appeared to him, as far as he could judge, to be quite up to the average standard of such things!

A nice chance *he* would stand against the man

who would tell her that her face was like a fresh blush rose, that her hair was a wandering sun-beam imprisoned by her smiles; and her eyes like two evening stars.

There are various ways of flattering, and, of course, you must adapt your style to your subject. Some people like it laid on with a trowel, and this requires very little art. With sensible persons, however, it needs to be done very delicately, and more by suggestion than actual words. A good many like it wrapped up in the form of an insult, as—"Oh, you are a perfect fool, you are. You would give your last sixpence to the first hungry looking beggar you met;" while others will swallow it only when administered through the medium of a third person, so that if C. wishes to get at an A. of this sort he must confide to A.'s particular friend B. that he thinks A. a splendid fellow, and beg him, B, not to mention it, especially to A. Be careful that B. is a reliable man, though, otherwise he won't.

Those fine, sturdy John Bulls, who "hate flattery, sir," "Never let anybody get over *me* by flattery," &c. &c., are very simply managed. Flatter them enough upon their absence of vanity, and you can do what you like with them.

After all, vanity is as much a virtue as a vice. It is easy to recite copy-book maxims against its sinfulness, but it is a passion that can move us to good as well as to evil. Ambition is only vanity ennobled. We want to win praise and admiration—or Fame as we prefer to name it—and so we write great books, and paint grand pictures, and sing sweet songs; and toil with willing hands in study, loom, and laboratory.

We wish to become rich men, not in order to enjoy ease and comfort—all that any one being can taste of those may be purchased anywhere for two hundred pounds per annum—but that our houses may be bigger and more gaudily furnished than our neighbours'; that our horses and servants may be more numerous; that we may dress our wives and daughters in absurd, but expensive clothes; and that we may give costly dinners of which we ourselves individually do not eat a shilling's worth. And to do this, we aid the world's work with clear and busy brain, spreading commerce among its peoples, carrying civilization to its remotest corners.

Do not let us abuse vanity, therefore. Rather let us use it. Honour itself is but the highest form of vanity. The instinct is not confined solely to Beau Brummels and Dolly Vardens. There is the vanity of the peacock, and the vanity of the eagle. Snobs are vain. But so, too, are heroes. Come, oh! my young brother bucks, let us be vain together. Let us join hands, and help each other to increase our vanity. Let us be vain, not of our trousers and hair, but of brave hearts and working hands, of truth, of purity, of nobility. Let us be too vain to stoop to aught that is mean or base, too vain for petty selfishness and little-minded envy, too vain to say an unkind word or do an unkind act. Let us be vain of being single-hearted, upright gentlemen in the midst of a world of knaves. Let us pride ourselves upon thinking high thoughts, achieving great deeds, living good lives.

JEROME K. JEROME.

DAVIT LUNAN.

AN AULD LICHT IDYL.

BY J. M. BARRIE.

HIS grizzled head strained in its socket against a cramped left arm that sprawled over the paper, Davit Lunan added his signature to the laboured letter, transcribing both it and the fancy flourish beneath from a slate-pencil scroll. With a complacent tightening of his lips he corked the ink-bottle, and retreating cautiously from the table, as if to take the letter unawares, breathed more freely, the while he regarded his handiwork with a satisfaction that was not unmixed with awe. The bairn, Effie, looked on open-eyed, and when he balanced his pen on the unaccustomed ear that would not grip it of its own accord, the solemnity of her little face reflected his. After a momentary struggle an obstinate sunbeam asserted its right of rule, and tumbled all the puckers into a chubby dimple.

The four-year-old lassie crowed gleefully, and with one roguish eye on the pen made a strenuous attempt to scale her father's legs. A dull, vacant face was Davit Lunan's, but a light came into it when his horny hand trembled through her yellow hair, and he struggled nervously with his wistful mouth. The jaws that had opened stiffly refused to close, and Davit sat helpless as the mite of a bairn hung on to his knees, and climbed merrily into his lap. He looked furtively toward the door that separated the kitchen from his saw-mill, but there was no one there to smile. He strained his motherless child to his breast, and then there slunk down his brave old cheek the last tear that Davit ever shed. Shamefacedly he kissed the laughing "litlin." "I don't know why, unless God told him to do it, for it was not like a severe Auld Licht."

Davit had "redd" up his but and ben, sweeping the lumpy earthen floor and scraping the potatoes for a twelve o'clock dinner, as he had done every day, except on the Sabbath, since Effie's mother died. The splashing stream that the old man had brought into the house to rock her cradle and close the infant's drowsy eyes to its purring lullaby, was buffeted by the great mill-wheel, that had a hard time of it to keep its ground, not to speak of climbing the bouncing burn, and the ill-fitting knotted window-hole rattled peevishly to an occasional rush of wind. The bairn could hear her father's saw puling and rasping through the white wood in the mill, and his back-bent frame showed through the doorway in a shower of flying sawdust. Davit was gay, and the sparkling drops of water leapt high from the wheel to catch a glimpse of him humming or whistling at his work—

Come ower the watter,
Come ower the watter,
Come ower the watter, for Chair-lie.

Effie's fascinated eyes were on the "chimley," where the lordly letter stood, and she sat solemnly blinking at it from her three-legged stool. It was the only letter she had ever seen her father write, but she knew all about them. It should be posted, and there was no one to drop it into the hole. "Yallowchy"-haired Effie stood up on her stool,

stretching forth her dimpled arm for the letter. With a giggle of delight, quickly suppressed lest the sound should bring her father ben, she clutched it triumphantly, and tripping noiselessly over the sand with which Davit had strewn the floor, slipped out of the house, a knowing smile on her important face. There was music in her father's squealing saw, but she had to go to the post. Across the brig of planks and into the Tenements the litlin trotted, glancing neither to right nor left, her lips puckered into an elated chuckle. Down the straggling wynd, and across the square, and through Andra Allardice's close, grasping the letter in her hand. The life had faded from her wee baby face now, but her mouth was firm set, and her bewildered eyes fixed straight ahead. The letter had to be dropped down the hole. Hendry, the dummy, on his way to the woods with his empty barrow to dig out resinous roots for firewood, met her at the brae head. Then she toddled past Davie Haggart, breaking stones on the Whunny road, and was seen no more.

By-and-by the flapping mill-wheel came to rest, its sodden green boards showing rotten when they got the chance, and Davit Lunan, the sawdust still sticking to his patched and faded corduroys, came ben the house. He looked expectant as he sidled through the narrow doorway, but when his eyes realized the empty stool, the expression died from his patient face. That was all. Davit's bones creaked as he sank with an effort into his old-fashioned arm-chair, bought at a "roup" half a century before, and "waxed" over his arm to the pot on the fire to lift it a link higher up the joist. The bairn liked her potatoes "birstled." Then he rose stiffly, and went bareheaded to look slowly over the burn in the direction of the Tenements. There were children playing round the old wooden pump, chasing their scampering rabbits through the bits of gardens, but do you think Davit had to look twice to know that Effie was not there?

"Ye'll cry in at Janet Gow's," he asked of a passing neighbour, "and tell Effie to come till her dinner."

But Effie was not at Janet Gow's.

Lang Tammas paused, wob on back, to inquire after the bit lassie, and Davit answered without a quiver in his voice.

"I've warrant her at Bell Dundas's," said Tammas, passing on. And Davit answered—

"Ay," as if he knew she was with Bell Dundas.

A barefooted, mischievous laddie whom he saw climbing into the saw-mill by the dark hole through which went the axle of the dripping wheel, he accosted cheerily, as though this was the usual mode of entering his workshop. One of the rogues who made capital out of Davit's laughable affection for his child. The bantam cock that had crowed on his kitchen rafters almost since Effie's birth was offered freely to the boy, and cunning Davit opened a way to his heart by talking of yellow yites' eggs and destructive flies. Then his voice grew husky all at once.

"She's been sae muckle wi' me, Archie," he said apologetically; "an' I've nae mair. It's—it's Effie, ye ken. Ye'll hae her hoddan some gait?"

But Archie knew nothing of the child.

"Maybe," he said, "she'll hae fa'en into the burn."

Lunan returned to the house to mend the fire, and, forgetting his errand, wandered out again

into the Tenements, the peat in his hand, a shabby old saw-miller, nodding genially to all he met, to induce them to give him back his bairn.

"If we had haen ony mair," he repeated timidly; "but her mither's died, an'—an' she was so sma'."

The strength went gradually from Davie Haggart's shrivelled arm, and, resting deliberately on his hammer, he removed his spectacles and wiped them on his grimy "brot." He took a slow, comprehensive glance around at the fields and dykes, as if he now had an opportunity of seeing them for the first time during his fifty years' pilgrimage in those parts, and his eyes wandered aimlessly from the sombre firs and laughing yellow beeches of the three-cornered wood to the white-washed farms that dotted the valley. In the foreground two lazy colts, surveying him critically over a broken stile; in the distance, the frowning Whunny hill with a white scarf round its neck.

But though Davie looked long, he saw nothing of the infant that had toddled by him two hours before.

"Davit Lunan's lassieky," he said to himself, thinking he had at last solved the mystery that had troubled him.

He untied the red handkerchief that served as his provision-basket on week days, and was carried to the kirk in his hat on the Sabbath, and seating himself cautiously on the stones, dawdled over his dinner. When he had smacked his lips over his flagon of cold kail, and seen the last of his crumbling oatmeal cake and cheese, his uneasiness returned, and he looked long and thoughtfully down the road.

"I maun turn the crittur," was his reflection; but though the sun was his watch, he felt that it must be a long time now since Effie passed his cairn.

He lifted his hammer again, puzzling what he ought to do between the strokes, but soon let it drop from his hands. Tightening the cords that bound his legs below the knee, like garters outside his trousers, he slowly worked his way into his coat and waistcoat, the latter uppermost, and gathering his things over his shoulder, with a final dog-like look down the road, hobbled back to the village.

It was market-day, and the poor square had made its weekly attempt at bustle. Half a dozen ramshackle vegetable carts resting in line on their clumsy shafts; a dozen farmers' wives, in the dounce costumes of their mothers, hunkering under the shadow of the town-house, between walls of unhappy chickens and new-laid eggs, and rolls of butter spread temptingly on cabbage-leaves; the "dulse-man" vociferating beside his barrow; two rowdy fish-cadgers screaming libels at each other over a street array of crockery.

As Davie dandered into the square by the kirk brae, Sneeky Hobart's cracked bell tinkled up the back-wynd, and the bellman immediately afterwards took his stand by the side of Tam Alexander's (pronounced Elshioner) fish-cart, half a dozen startled boys at his heels.

Sneeky gave them time to gather, tinkling approval when the farmers' wives left their baskets to squeeze and hirstle nearer the bell; but too full of his official duties to return the familiar nod of

the yarn-covered weavers who hurried to him down the dark closes that gaped all round the square.

Davie Haggart stood on the outskirts of the crowd with gradually opening mouth.

Not every day was it given to Sneeky to "cry" a lost bairn, and the pitiful words fell slowly from his reluctant lips. Before he spoke he was the observed of all eyes, the possessor of exclusive news, but his tongue had hardly ceased to roll round the concluding sentence when the fickle crowd took up the cry itself. All that was left for Hobart was to bustle into another street with his doleful news, to find that it had clattered there before him. Wives flung up their windows to shout their fears shrilly across the wynd; the racket of the looms was hushed, and the laddies put their humming "peeries" in their pockets. It was Effie Lunan that had wandered from the saw-mill—Davie's bairn. What could Davie be thinking of to let her out of his sight? Was he taking on terrible?

Of one accord the men gathered on the saw-mill brig, and looked perplexedly into the face of the laughing burn that swivelled, a sawdust colour, between wooden banks; but the women pressed their bairns closely to their wrappers, and stared in each other's whitening faces.

Davie Haggart was one of the last to leave the square, and when he moved slowly from it, it was in the direction of his own house. Both leaves of its door were open, and when Davie had entered and sat down, he saw that his wife was out. The porridge, that should have awaited him on his return home in the gloaming, hung from no link on the joist over the fire, nor did the "porter," which he took with it in lieu of milk, stand on the well-scoured dresser. For some minutes Davie felt uneasy, but his dull face took some animation as he remembered that he had left his work earlier than usual. Putting on his old glengarry bonnet, he stumbled to the door, and gaping up and down the Tenements, moved off to the saw-mill, his face troubled and perplexed.

A log of wood, with which some one had sought to improvise a fire between the bricks that narrowed Davit Lunan's grate, turned peevishly to charcoal without casting any light on the faces of the men and women gathered gloomily in the saw-mill kitchen. Already the burn near the mill had been carefully searched, with Davit Lunan's white face staring at the searchers from his door; and not even the minister could suggest another step. The room was small and close. A closet bed with the door off afforded sitting room for more than one Auld Licht, and the worn dresser, the "little table," and the "big table," had been similarly utilized. A great eight-day clock solemnly ticked away Davit's life in a dingy corner, and over the mantelpiece hung a gaudy sampler in many colours, the work of Effie's mother. The narrow "chimley" supported nothing heavier than two China figures, both of which had lost their heads, and the half of an unframed looking-glass clung to the peeling wall. Overhead the heavy rafters were crossed with old sticks and saws, and a pitcher and pan of water—such as no village home in the North showed separately—stood together in the narrow passage. Over the cage of the canary at the small window an Auld Licht anticipating the

worst had flung an empty sack, and the bird, which had scandalized the minister by trilling forth on the Sabbath, had ceased to sing.

Davie Haggart hesitated on the threshold, and then dandering in, drew attention to himself by a laboured "pech," and looked around him for a seat. It would have been poor manners to fling to the door behind him.

"Fine growin' day, Davit," he said deliberately.

"It is so, Davie," answered hospitable Davit Lunan.

"No muckle drouth, I'm thinkin'," said the wright, as if much relieved by the turn taken by the conversation.

After that there was silence, and Davie sat him down on a three-legged stool. All the company turned their eyes on Lunan.

"Ye'll maybe tak' anither seat, Davie," he said humbly—he could not help it. "That's her stool, an' she was on't when I gae'd ben i' mornin'."

He looked imploringly round the room at the stern Auld Licht faces he had known all his weary, unselfish life.

"It's uncommon foolish," he said, with rattling jaws, "but the twa 'ose bein' sae muckle thegither, an'—an'—"

Poor Davit Lunan broke down utterly.

"Oh, Davie, man," he cried, "she was nichty sma'."

Haggart looked perplexedly before him.

"She was juist a bairnie," Easie Whamond said.

Then Davie found his tongue.

"Juist a bairnie," he repeated cheerily.

"That's hit," Davit said wistfully. "There was naething o' her ava."

The saw-miller turned away his head, and as Davie saw the others gathering round the minister at the door, he moved restlessly on his chair.

"Hoo's Effie?" he said at last.

"Did ye no ken she was tint, Davie?" Davit asked in a voice that was not his own.

"Ay, I kint," Davie said. "She's upi' Whunny road."

Lunan drew a long breath and stepped forward, but the minister was before him.

"Tell us what you know at once, Haggart," he said, taking Davie by the shoulder. Only a growing boy in broadcloth was the minister, but out of the pulpit he had a heart. Yet was it a sad tale Davie had to tell, and not an Auld Licht there but shook his head when he heard it.

"The Whunny road!" they exclaimed solemnly, and when Davit Lunan heard them he covered his face with his hands.

"I meant to turn her," Davie said to the bairn's father in the kitchen, while the minister hurriedly organized a search party on the saw-mill brig, "but she was ower quick for 's."

The brig that Lunan had floored anew but the other day, because the bairn's little boot had caught in a worn plank! The brig from which she had crowed to see the whirls of sawdust cloud the burn with Davit Lunan looking on entranced. Ah, Lunan, the rotten old planks would have served your turn.

"It's—it's a kin' o' peety," was all the reproach the saw-miller spoke; and he staggered feebly to the door.

"The Whunny road," were the words passed

from mouth to mouth, and the driblet of weavers fell into line. Impetuous is youth, nor was the minister perhaps much to blame for starting at once. But Lang Tammas, his chief elder, paused on the threshold.

"The Lord giveth," he said solemnly, raising his hand, "and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Lunan bravely opened his mouth, but the "Amen" stuck in his throat.

"Ye'll excyouse me, Tammas," he said.

The little party of searchers, back-bent weavers for the most part, filed as quickly as their stiff limbs would allow them up the brae head, and took the Whunny road. Out of respect to Davit several of them had donned their most funereal garments, and their threadbare "blacks" gleamed in the sun. Hobart's bell tinkled in the van, until inverting it, he carried it by the tongue; and Lang Tammas had his proper place by the minister's side. Thrummy Cable was there, an unfathomable man, who had been discovered in tears on the morning of his wedding—no Auld Licht could say why; and Sandy Dundas, who had once been the minister's right hand, but had fallen from his high estate; and Finny's grieve, with an unenviable notoriety for sleeping in church; and Sam'l Todd, who was said to do as he liked with the women. The wright had attended so many very similar processions before (in the interests of the coffin) that he may be excused for now and then mistaking this for a funeral; and between him and Davie Haggart tottered Davit Lunan, his worn face looking old and done, and his mean limbs cracking in their corduroys. Shabby showed his patched trousers against the wright's shining blacks; but what sarcastic tongue would ridicule the legs browned by an old man as he hunkered over a dying fire mending a bairn's frock. Easie Haggart and Mag Whamond and Eppie Allardice were all famous housewives, but they did not titter to see Davit sewing on baby buttons with cord and a gully knife.

The day was fresh and bright, the clover lands lazily returning the salute of the beaming sun, and violets tipping the bleating meadows with a frame of blue. The smell of flowers was in the air, flowers in holiday garments that smiled indifference to the fate of Effie Lunan. Ah! the fickle flowers that had clustered round her, and nestled on the bairnie's neck on the long Saturday afternoons when prattling Effie's wee hand drew Davit Lunan through the woods. Electricity, they say, was only discovered the other day, but there have been baby fists since the beginning of time. The wizened saw-miller, ashamed to look so young and happy, told you in an imploring look not to smile when you met him trotting gaily behind his litlin, and took you so timidly aside to offer his snuffmull, and say that she was all he had. Even the yellow buttercups that had twined themselves into garlands as they cuddled in her lap, that her father had never known the wonder of till they were laid by the bairn in his hand or showered on his frosty brow, smiled heartlessly on Davit when he came alone. Glazed might be Effie's eyes to-day, but her old friends the bluebells by the roadside, that look like bits of the heavens, nodded brightly to every passer-by. All but the daisies. The daisies that never played wee Effie false had stretched out their stems after her to

call her back as she tripped over them, and bowed their sad little heads when she heedlessly toddled on. It was from them we learned the bairn's track after she wandered from the Whunny road, and wistfully they looked after us when we left them on the skirt of the Bruckle Wood.

The hills had ceased to echo back their wailing response to Hobart's cracked bell, weary, as even so-called inanimate things may be, of taking up a cry that led to nothing. Far in the rear of the more eager searchers, the bellman and the wright had found a seat among the mossy stones of a broken dyke, and others, footsore and depressed, had fallen out of the ranks at various bends in the road. Even the sun looked weary in the heavens. But the minister and his little band of followers scattered over the fields and on the hill-sides, despondent of visage, but daring not to lag. As night came on, strange looking women in short petticoats and men's coats, appeared on the edges of the thin woods, cutty pipe in mouth; and in the meadows, the mole-catcher ceased his labours. Dummy left the roots of the trees in peace, tinkers cowered round their kettles under overhanging banks, and the squirrels were shadows gliding ghost-like from tree to tree. At a distant farm-town on the hill a fitful light, winking to the wind, blinked itself to death, and all the land was hushed. But no one had seen Davit Lunan's bairn, not even the ragged angler on his way homeward from the Whunny burn. It was gloaming, and the search party moved silently like a funeral procession of the dead. The buttercups and the bluebells closed their petals, and the daisies grew heavy on their stems.

Old and feeble was Davit Lunan, nor the heaven-sent gift of tears for such as he. Blessed the moaning mother by the cradle of her eldest-born; and the maid in tears for the lover who went out so brave in the morning, and was not at evenfall; and the weeping parents who can pray for soldier sons; and the wife on her husband's bosom. But Effie was Davit's bond to earth; and Lisbeth, her mother, who had given a life for a life, lay dead in the crammed kirkyard. No sun nor flower for him as he hobbled along the base of the Whunny hill, nodding patiently to what the minister said, and forcing to his reluctant face a kindly smile that would have made a dumb animal turn away its head.

Only the laddies who had fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers, jeered when Davit, at the rumble of an approaching cart, would stop short in the middle of a plank, and hurrying out snatch his babbling treasure in his arms, and bear her jealously to her seat beside him in the saw-mill. The bairn, sunk in a bed of shavings, crowed to see the sawdust buzzing like flies about her father's head, and Davit, too, would laugh and make merry for her edification, and whistle "Ower the Watter for Chairlie." The knowing litlin, who lifted her father's saws to within an inch of her baby-face, and held them there till, petrified, Davit looked, when she let them fall with a wicked dimple of delight, and fled gleefully to his arms, as sure of her lover as ever maiden was of man.

Hardly old enough were Effie's playmates to smile when two darned stockings suggested Davit's needle. The kersecky made from his bairn's shawl saved his spending money on himself, and there was nothing very diverting in a

dull old man surrendering the luxury of tobacco for a lassie's sake. The time had come when he looked wistfully back to a fevered litlin tossing in his closet bed, the time when a feeble light burned through the silent night in Davit Lunan's dwelling, and a trembling, heavy-eyed man sat motionless on a high-backed chair. How noiselessly he approached the bonny mite, and replaces the hot arm that had wandered from beneath the coverlet of many colours. The love that surged up to his mouth as he bent imploringly over the bed! How pitiful the fond old man, whose years reach their close, crawling with a peat to the fire on his hands and knees that his shadow may not come between his sickly bairn and the light. Restless and fevered she, but Effie never in all that nightmare time heard her father rake the fire. Ah, for the old time when imperious Effie told her father to lie down beside her, and he climbed shamefacedly into the bed, looking so timidly at the minister as who would say he would not, but he could not help it. And Mr. Dishart put his hat over his eyes. But such things are not to be told. They are between a man and his God.

It was far up the Whunny hill that we got Effie's little shoe, one of the pair her father had found it so hard to make with the laughing bairn making off mischievously with the leather. Davit took it in his hands, the muddy worn shoe, with its gay lining sadly dragged, and looked up, oh, so pitifully on the faces that had aged and wrinkled with his own. His jaws cracked, the feeble head swung loose, and the glazed eyes wandered all round the little group till they rested on Davie Haggart.

"I'm dootin' she's died, Davie," he said.

The Auld Lichts grouped severely round him, trouble in their furrowed cheeks, and Davit stood still among the brackens, looking rather helpless. He held the soiled little shoe tenderly in both hands, and it almost looked as if he mistook it for a bairn.

"I'd na ken," Davie Haggart said, after a pause, to the others, "but what its kin' o' nat'ral."

Lunan looked into Haggart's face, and then every eye was turned away. He laid his shaking head on the shoulder of the friend of his youth, and the soul of Davie Haggart went out to Davit Lunan. It was no longer the gloomy Whunny hill peopled with sombre shadows, but two bare-footed herd-laddies wiling away the days with "knifey" on the green fields of two adjoining farms, and sharing the early swede, and guddling for trout in the bubbling burn. The moon peeping over the hills had found them on their ragged backs with the cattle mowing around in a narrowing circle. They had grown different boys, nor known why, among the wild roses of red and white, and trampling breast-high among the ferns. The raspberry bushes they had stripped together into flagons gleaming in the grass, and how often their lips had shown the blackberry juice! Davie had provided the bent pin with which Davit first lured a trusting trout to its undoing, and Davit in return had let him throw the neck of a condemned farm hen. They had climbed together up the dark sides of a dank and frowning den, through which a rush of water passionately flings itself against jagged cliffs and boulders, and breathlessly they had held each others hands to

look down in awe at the foaming slug, where the water gathers solid between banks so close that the farmers can spring across, before taking a blind appalling leap that carries it over the trees, tearing themselves out by the root in their effort to bridge the torrent, to turn somersaults in the air, and fall lifeless in the sunless depths below. They had wandered knee-deep through thirsty hay when sweeping scythes sang in the cornfields, and larks trilled in the blue sky, and all the braes were golden with the yellow broom.

The flashing shuttle rattles along the loom, and two broad-shouldered men toil from misty morn till gloaming at the web. Their backs round together as they bow their heads among the thrums of thread, and peddles groan under their heavy boots. Broken threads of yarn gather on the festering looms, on the bumpy earthen floor, and on the walls and window, as if a monster spider had gripped them in its crafty web. The place smells of yarn, and the less stolid of the two men is beginning to learn "Come ower the Watter for Chairlie." They are stoitering down the Tenements under a load of crushing wobs that bear them to the ground, or that rest on barrows, supported by ropes of yarn from their drooping shoulders; or it is Saturday night, and they are in the square, clean and dapper, talking with other gallants about lassies. They are courting the same maid, Cree Dundas's daughter, and she sits on a stool by the door, working a stocking, with a lover on each side. They drop in upon her mother, straining the marmalade juice through a bag suspended between two chairs; they sheepishly admire while Bell sings the well-plucked hen; for love of her they help Cree to pit his potatoes, and then for love of the other each gives her up.

It is a Friday night, and from a but and ben around which the rabble fling themselves, shouting for largess, like a roaring sea in a dark night dashing against a lighthouse, Auld Licht couples emerge in strangely gay and bright apparel.

Davit Lunan leads the way with a self-conscious lass, and Davie is at his heels with another. It must be Lunan's wedding-day, and this the procession from the bride's old home to her new one. Many a year rolls on. Davit is at the saw-mill now, and by-and-by the grumpy gravedigger goes out to dig a grave. A handful of sober, emotionless mourners wind their slow way up a steep brae through beds of fallen leaves, with something black on their shoulders; the white cords are dropped silently on the lowered coffin, and Davit Lunan returns to the old home that will know his wife no more. Ay, with an unbecoming haste, for Lisbeth has not gone away without leaving a legacy behind, and he thinks that Effie can pick him out already.

A dingy, comfortless kirk, with a solemn saw-miller in black standing on the pulpit-stairs; a minister whirling like a teetotum above him; a congregation rising from its seat as one man, not to miss the heckling, and a blotch of white in a proud godmother's arms. In true Auld Licht fashion Effie is christened on the Sabbath following her birth; and after that—ah, to look back upon it!—the saw whistles once more through the wood, the water glides beneath the cradle's peddles, and Effie winds and winds herself round poor old Davit's heart. He sings her to sleep with

no more manliness than a woman. He tells her the wonderful story of how she was first found in a cabbage-blade, and when Effie can toddle down the wynd with her exulting father it is the bairn leads.

Alas! for the flash into bygone days that sorrow gives! As Davit Lunan and Davie Haggart hold each other's hands, the light dies from their eyes, backs grow round and bent; silvered the hair that lay in tousled locks on laddies' heads, and shrunken limbs mock the lustiness of youth. In the morning Davit Lunan had a bairn, but where is she now?

The day was closing in, and obscured the tree-tops on the Whunny hill. The weary searchers might have been smugglers laden with whisky-casks, such as haunted the mountains in the dim days of the past, and no one knew where to turn. Far away in the Tenements, mothers still wrung their hands for Effie, but the rest of the village grew drowsy, and candles went out. A nipping wind cut the search party, and fled from them down the hill, by-and-by to bear into the valley the solemn drone of a clerical voice raised in prayer. Bared were the Auld Licht, the breeze even lifting Davit Lunan's scant locks, and bowed their reverent heads. Then they glanced at the minister, and raised aloft a fallen rowan tree, from which all the sap had gone. One of the old-world psalms of David trembled straight to heaven:—

Yes, though I wa-sak in dith's dark vale-ale,
Yit wull I fear none ill-ill;
For Thou art with me-me; and Thy rod-od,
And staff-aff me comfort still-ill.

Mr. Dishart gave the solemn signal, and the tree was allowed to fall as it listed. Straight down the hill it pointed. It was the last attempt, but when the others turned to follow the minister down hill, Davit Lunan was standing still with the dragged shoe in his arms. Not his the blame. He could not move, only smiled helplessly in response to the minister's beckoning, and there was agony in his face, and still there came no tears.

Davie Haggart took him by the hand.

"Davit, man—Davit Lunan," he said, "she was but fower year auld!"

Davit did not speak. Hardly he seemed to hear, but with slow and shaking hand he unbuttoned his trouser pocket, and drew from it a worn snuff-mull. With a gaping mouth he handed it to Davie, but the wind carried away its contents, and the mull fell among the heather.

"Keep yourselves from idols," said Lang Tammas sternly.

But the minister was young, and children lisped his name at the white manse among the trees at home. They would be saying their prayers by their white bed-sides now. He took the gay, bespattered shoe gently from Davit's hands, and went down the hill, the old man following him like a dog that has lost his bone.

A bonny wee bairn with closed eyes lay cold and stiff on the brink of the burn that gurgled on to the old saw-mill, one little bare foot washed by the running stream. So the Whunny of her baby days had rocked Effie to sleep after all. Half-covered with white daisies, the chubby hand clutched a letter; and when Davit Lunan saw her, he sat down beside her.

ALONE.

ALONE 'midst eager, struggling multitudes,
 Fierce in the race for honour, place, or
 self,
 Here, in the modern Babel's ceaseless feuds,
 Alone! although I join the fray myself.
 The fickle crowd's applause may greet my ear;
 But there is still a critic who must speak
 Within my inmost soul a voice I hear
 "Thou art applauded when thou art most
 weak."

What though the victor's wreath my brow may
 grace,
 Who knows my sinful wanderings from the
 right?
 Or if the world proclaims me false and base,
 None guess my prayerful searchings for the
 light.
 Fame cannot quench this fire which in me
 burns;
 Neglect's chill fingers cannot stay its breath:
 To reach the goal the restless spirit yearns,
 But finds that goal still distant unto death.

So to the end of time 'twill be with man,
 Made in the likeness of that mighty One.
 Content can grasp no mind within its span,
 Our longings cease not till life's journey's
 done;
 And when death's dark, swift-flowing stream we
 view,
 All that we love, all those we call our own—
 Wealth, honour, friends—to all we bid adieu,
 And quit life as we came to it—alone!

H. McD.

A SINGULAR WAGER:

AN ECCENTRICITY.

By the Author of "A Modern Minister," "Saul Weir," &c.

THE year Oldwit M'Cracker and myself left
 Oxford, that versatile genius let me in for a
 singular wager.

It was this. We bindingly agreed, by witnessed
 compact, to pay to the other the sum of five
 hundred pounds, upon an estimate being made at
 the end of a month of "findings" during that time—
 that is to say, whichever of us came upon the largest
 number of articles possible to fix any value upon was
 to receive from the other the above-named sum of
 money. The system of operation was to be that,
 weather permitting, we fairly alternated days,
 leaving out Sundays; the event of illness upon
 either side to be a period of cessation for both.
 The time agreed upon was six hours per diem,
 according to convenience, and darkness or day-
 light being of no account. Each was to be
 accompanied by the servant of the other, and no
 confidence to be betrayed. At the end of the month
 a mutual friend of high standing would be elected
 to serve as umpire, with the provision that, if
 necessary, an ordinary trade-valuer should be
 called in to rate the articles.

We staked the money, and commenced, with the
 best wishes of our friends, and the ludicrous

sympathy of old maiden ladies, who hoped we
 would find our senses.

I commenced my research by the sea—one never
 knows what the waves may lay at one's feet.

It was chilly work, watching the billows rear
 and sweep onward, scanning the beach to see if
 the long reaches of weed-entangled foam left any
 valuable deposit amongst their refuse. I got
 tired of it, and was saying, "I'll shift our quarters,
 Williams," when I saw a small piece of wood, or
 it appeared small, and this came washing onward,
 over and over, tossed and played with, and at last
 it was buried, splashed and beaten upon, deep in
 the surging, snowy foam at our feet. Williams
 picked up the thing, which we found to be an
 inlaid tea-caddy, thrown over, no doubt, by persons
 in distress. It was locked fast; the lock was
 corroded, and at the time I could not force it.
 Upon shaking the box some hard substance was
 heard within.

"To-morrow, Williams, your master com-
 mences; I think I will go to town myself for the
 day after. I have before now picked up pretty
 trinkets in the cities——"

"At the same time, sir," said Williams respect-
 fully, "there's more to pick 'em up."

"A sensible observation, my good fellow. Well,
 we will stay here a little longer, for we must not
 complain of the day thus far, although what the
 old box contains I am at a loss to imagine. By-
 the-way, is your master generally lucky at finding
 things, Williams?"

"Picked up a purse once with a fifty-pound note
 in it, sir."

"The devil he did!" say I, not in the best of
 moods, and thinking gloomily of the stakes, while
 I scanned the pavement in front of our hotel for
 the silver rim off a meerschaum, which somebody
 else had probably picked up.

We stepped inside, and I swooped upon a six-
 pence, as I thought; it turned out to be a well-
 trodden linen button with the linen off.

"Leave it, friend," I said, with a saturnine
 smile; "your master may be this way."

A flower-holder next, which some young man
 had dropped from a too-confiding buttonhole; it
 was glass, and it was gilded, and I desired Wil-
 liams to put it in his pocket.

"I wonder what our broker will value that at?"
 said I grimly.

Williams looked another way, his sympathy too
 deep for words.

Walking along, we desried at right angles the
 gauntest, wedgiest female that ever mistook a
 man for a Dutch cheese. I know, because we
 both sighted a halfpenny at the same time, and
 both swooping together, the collision almost clove
 me asunder. Of course I secured the prize, but
 saw in an instant it had been in the fire and was
 useless, when I politely handed it to the unsuc-
 cessful candidate, with the remark—

"Permit me to return you this."

She took it, looked at it, and scathed me with
 the lightning of her greenish orbs.

"If I don't do better than this, Williams, I
 shall begin taking pocket-handkerchiefs."

"Against the rules, sir," says Williams, with a
 comical expression of discomfort. "Maybe you'd
 have better luck in the theatre, sir?"

"A good thought! We will turn in there.
 Very likely to be some opera-glasses lying about.

If it hadn't been for this precious wager, I should have found a barrow-load of things by this time. I've always had an idea, Williams, that one cannot walk out a day in the year without finding something of value, little or much."

Mr. Williams shook his head dubiously.

"I never found nothing, sir, but an old horn pocket-knife, on which there wasn't any horn and that hadn't any blade!"

"That wasn't a very wealthy lot, then. Fact is, Williams, you're not what the music-hall singers would call 'a lucky dog.'"

"No, sir; for picking that up I dropped half-a-sovereign out of my waistcoat pocket."

Laughing over this *dénouement*, we arrived at the theatre.

Opera-glasses were not on the rampage that evening, because there was somebody waiting to take care of them; neither tippets nor swans-down-lined mantles, nor some stalwart being's crush-hat or eye-glass; in fact, people were awfully close that night—could not have been worse had there been a money panic. Going out, in the lobby, I picked up a leather pocket-book, rather worn, but containing notes, I believed, and my heart warmed again.

Far off, under the flickering beams of a suburban lamp, I opened it, to discover fifteen county-court summons, pawn tickets for a mangle, a coop and four flat-irons, a lot of butcher's tickets pinned together, and all unpaid, and I thought it a pity that young man lost his portefeuille.

Passing a house, we saw a scraper, and under the scraper something shining. Requesting Williams to look another way, and especially up and down the street, I removed it—the key I mean, and how the poor man must have sworn on returning from that little party!

We came to shipping, threaded our way through tarry blackguards, who scowled upon us as though we would steal their anchors; the shore was dusky with drawn-up vessels; a ship, tugged to her rest after many seas and many storms, was sleeping on her shadow; through grim rigging a grim moon glinted down upon us; men that "house on the wild sea with wild usages," hurled salt oaths against fishless nights; the moist sand, dimpled with shallow pools, wetted our feet; and "What are we here for, sir?" asked Mr. Williams, graver than ever.

"Well, you know my belief in the waters; one day you will see what they will do for us. I mean to try the Thames when I've done here!"

"There's nothing about but rusty chains and anchors, sir; and better fill our pockets up above with gold lockets than with anchors down here—lighter to carry, and might answer your purpose just as well, sir!"

Herewith the faithful fellow shrugged his shoulders; he entertained mortal repugnance to the water-side.

"As you like; but it strikes me gold is scarce to-night."

"There's a new moon to-morrow, sir, and it may bring you luck."

"Or your master—which?"

We took the broadest of broad roads and most frequented of thoroughfares; we walked in the wake of our social bees, and we followed in the track of pleasure, but with exception of some cigar-ash which entered our eye, we found nothing.

And we went home, to solemnly inspect and appraise the day's finds. One eye was quite enough to see all round these. One inlaid tea-caddy, one pocket-book, one latch-key.

"How much on the tea-caddy, Williams?"

Mr. Williams eyed the box critically.

"Well, sir, my mother used to keep a second-hand shop; buy anything and sell anything, and many's the queer lot she's had come in, but she wouldn't 'ave give that thing house-room, I know."

"Good. How much for the pocket-book?"

"Well, that's only fit for the dust-bin; no offence, sir."

"All right; now for the key?"

"They don't fetch nothink, sir, begging your pardoning."

"I shall to the highway, good Williams, after this!"

"Excuse me, sir, but there is something inside the caddy."

"True, there may be, in addition to the packet of letters I expect to find there."

We forced it with a knife in general use for sardines, potted meat, and such like obstinate cases. It contained something evidently wrapped in haste in a fine cambric handkerchief. I experienced a sense of almost reverence upon unfolding the parcel. Within was disclosed the miniature of a young and very handsome man, and, from the haughty line of the features, a patrician. The picture was set round with filigree gold and diamonds. My eyes resumed their accustomed sparkle, and Mr. Williams ejaculated, "Well, I never!"

"Let your master beat this if he can."

"He's a desperate lucky gentleman is master, sir."

Having carefully locked away my treasures, I sat down to a quiet read. I felt satisfied with results thus far, and wondered what sort of luck my friend would meet with on the morrow.

On the day after that, I had asked Williams to arouse me early, but little supposed the awakening summons would be timed at somewhere about 3.15 A.M. This Mr. Williams apologized for by explaining that he had no watch, and the sun was shining in his eyes, and he respectfully added something about that copy-book myth, the early worm.

In the still hours, then, we entered upon our continued quest. The macadamized track looking as grey and barren as the beach of the Dead Sea. Quite in character I picked up a slate pencil, some urchin's loss of the evening before. "One half-penny," consigning it to my pocket with a chilly sort of enthusiasm. Our footsteps rattled and clattered with supernatural noise, as though we had no business there. A policeman came from behind some corner, looked scared, and disappeared round the next.

"Just see if that officer has dropped his truncheon."

Williams thought I was joking. Some steps on we found a shirt-button, and I solemnly asked him the relative value of one shirt-button; then he knew that I did not jest in the grey, grim, tenantless hours, and that I was terribly in earnest; and we discovered a fusee—our industry and early rising was bearing fruit! We took the road to the hills environing our town, and upon those breezy heights secured the serpentine iron of a sheep-

crook, the dropped title-page of a library book much under the effects of dew of the mountain, and a biscuit; no carpet-bag required for these.

It was the season of the early Races, and the idea had occurred to me of going over the ground contiguous to the Stand. For that we made, and were rewarded by finding a shilling amongst scraps of card, shreds of tan, trampled grass, straw, and pieces of paper. We found nothing else in that quarter, but making a circuit explored the hill-side and valley where the Bohemians, hangers-on of these sports, had pitched hooped cart and tent, and were apparently engaged in sleeping. Lightly as we trod, however, accustomed to surprise as they are, our footsteps awoke one, probably the scout of his particular tribe, and in an instant the whole colony was alert. Surrounded by the vagrants, whose unintelligible jargon confused without informing us, I sat upon the shaft of an old cart, and allowed Williams to gesticulate as he would. Whether they supposed us capable of stealing their chickens, imagined our nefarious designs had relation to their steeds, conceived we were burglars of the dewy hours, or mistook us for servants of her Majesty, I know not, but it was a predicament from which we found the only release would be by the turning out of our pockets. I handed over the shirt-button—on the enlightened principle of English trade with the dusk-skins—but this caused such a commotion I concluded myself as usual in error. To make it worse that fellow Williams could not restrain the broad and fatal grin natural to the creature. I was forced to produce my purse, and was mulct to the extent of three half-crowns! Then we were permitted to withdraw, but not without being carefully watched beyond camp.

"Well, this has been a profitable hour, Williams! I think you had better have left me in bed."

On our way over the ridges of ploughed land, near a farmstead at foot, we came upon a brown jannaped powder-flask of some sportsman; it was but little injured and Williams put it away in his pocket, it was the richest find of this before breakfast walk; and while partaking of that sociable meal I said to my companion—

"Small portmanteau—town this afternoon."

He looked surprised, but was sufficiently disciplined to abstain from expressing any comment.

Later, we stood on London Bridge, myself examining the flags where never a vestige of any production of value is ever seen.

"Let us go to the water-side," I ordered.

We did so, stood upon the lowermost step of a flight of steps, watching the sun set through piers and the maze of shipping.

Something came bumping up against the stone buttress, it was a bottle, but that bottle contained something else. Diligently we tried to attract that wayward missive, but the heave of the water lifted it from our stick's reach every time we had well-nigh secured it; once at a sudden dart upon it, had not Sancho held the tails of my coat I had been in.

"Hullo, booby, what'er yer fishing of?" this from a young man with tangled locks above bridge, who appeared much interested in the net result of our industry and patience. Some others stopped, then a lot more, who wondered what on earth or in the water was the matter!

"Better leave it I think, sir," said Williams

with an anxious glance upwards, "or we shall have the police on us, they'll think we're undermining the bridge!"

We had got into such a confounded mess in the morning, poor Williams had not recovered its effect.

"There's something in that bottle, and I'll have it!" said I, with the obstinacy of the true Briton.

Meanwhile the crowd had thickened. I heard the explanatory comments *ad libitum* for enlightenment of back-comers. On the recess near by, a select company had taken reserved seats.

"What's the matter, mate?" squealed an old duchess with a fish-basket, of a lord of a potato-brasier.

"Chap hawling a hinfant!" was the answer; and the old duchess informed the lady behind that "A hinfant had been murdered!"

Some one coming up at the moment gathered but partial significance, and acquainted a swift young man who paused to put the query as a comet might or a shooting-star in its passage, and this swift one dashed on with the simple repetition, "Infants—murdered!"

When one who heard, looking over and seeing a boat, gave out that "A boat-load of infants had come to land!"

Which developed sundry other extravagant assumptions, so that after all that bottle had much to answer for. And all the time we were making frantic attempts to cajole and caress our treasure to closer intimacy; but the thing was as volatile, as roguish, as an incapable bottle adrift on the Thames ever can be.

"I've got him, sir!" and with a terrific lunge Williams hooked it with the handle of my best silk umbrella.

At that instant, however, as bad luck would have it, a steamboat shot through the arch, and umbrella and bottle were borne in company far from the reach of my faithful factotum.

We did not abandon hope, and, indeed, to recede would have been a matter of difficulty, a compact crowd was blockading the stairs. The object was washed nearer. Above, men arrived with ropes, drags, and hooks, and slowly lowered these, not for one moment aware what they were in quest of. Rowers and the amphibious loafers of the water-side mustered their craft and made for treasure trove. Nearer and nearer the strangely-knit pair of waifs were borne towards us, by natural reaction of the water, the handle of my umbrella entangled in the string around the neck of the bottle. It became uncertain whether, after all our pains, the first of those boats would not rob us of the prize. But, no! The river god was propitious: the property was laid at our feet. Williams swooped to possession, when the strong arm of the Law interfered in the name of the Thames Conservancy. The bottle was claimed, and amidst the breathless expectation of a multitude was uncorked. It contained a muslin bag stuffed with lavender; initials were embroidered on the muslin, and it doubtless carried a story, but no value, and I let the Conservancy have its own without a murmur. The crowd slowly dispersed, bearing with them, I believe, uncomplimentary convictions that we were a couple of suspicious characters.

We betook ourselves to Regent Street for a change.

That we were right was proved by our finding upon the crossing, slipped into a crevice of the curb, near by a one-eyed, destitute, old crossing-sweeper, half-a-sovereign.

After that, hopeful and satisfied, we turned in at our hotel.

The day following was a period of cessation, and I drove to Bushey Park to see a friend who owns a villa on the outskirts. This good man took me at odds that I would not find £25 worth in gold and silver. His relish for eccentric wagers is well-known, but he said this was one of the best he had ever heard of. His wife also manifested considerable interest, and disinterestedly offered to take charge of all the ear-rings found. Believing that people, as a rule, preserve these safer than the other sort of rings, I as disinterestedly agreed; and I did the very next day post her a sweet pair we picked up in Tottenham Court Road, the value of which might perhaps be twopence halfpenny.

Williams has a thrifty idea that watching the boys sweep out the shops is, in the early morning, a productive source of revenue, and at the bustling thoroughfare above mentioned we intercepted the rubbish in process of transition from various temples of business. The laying of dust, like the laying of scandal, is a more difficult matter than at first appears, probably on this account it is necessary to do both with completeness. When the Rev. Sydney Smith went to Foston, he relates, "I began to thump the cushion of my pulpit, as is my wont when I preach, but the accumulated dust of a hundred and fifty years made such a cloud that for some minutes I lost sight of my congregation." In the same way I think it may be said that those Tottenham Court Road boys created not only clouds to obscure the threepenny-pieces, but also themselves, in which they vanished from sight.

But although our efforts were futile in this direction, we did discover a last-night's play-bill of the Prince of Wales's Theatre which was fluttering about, coquetting with the posts in a very loose manner.

Turning off by a quiet street from the busy thoroughfare, we espied a paint-brush, it lay below a ladder, the artisans had gone home to breakfast. Williams picked it up and put it in his pocket—so much for morality! The houses in this street were painfully alive with new coats. At one terrace the tenants had evidently selected their own hues, and the consequence was a strip of patchwork, here a sickly drab, and there a staring stone, while above was a pale fawn, and below a faded brown, and so on until a decorative nightmare was fixed upon the mind. Many a good street and much good architecture suffers from such diversity of taste. It was the great paint month in London, and the luscious odour of turpentine and other reviving aromatics was keen upon the air; the time when man goeth unto his moist home, and into his pungent rooms, and gathers the broadcloth skirts carefully about him, for well he knoweth that certain impressions are ineffaceable.

This bit of moralizing arose of that paint-brush. During which I had lost my follower. I was scandalized by finding him posted in front of a hosier's, where he was deliberately reviewing the regiment of calves strung on brass rods. Zebra-like striped hosen hath many varieties, but it

turned out not to be these Mr. Williams was inspecting, but a reward-bill lower down, which informed the public of the loss of a gold cross set with diamonds, and promised them a handsome guerdon for the restoration of the same.

"We must find that cross, Williams."

"I suspect some brewer's dray has pounded it afore now, sir. Or else that its picked up by some one more lucky than ourselves at finding valuables."

We read the ground over—"Between Euston Station and Regent's Park." Wide field, but suppose we try it, we can find something else no doubt."

My plan was to inspect the terminus approaches and departures, and cab-ranks contiguous—it is easy to drop jewellery while bustling about after luggage, looking to servants, getting into cabs, and so on. I had no opportunity of knowing how long the article had been lost, how long the bill had been in the window, but it appeared fresh and clean, and the shop not one likely to harbour old bills. To make certain, I went back to the shop, and while purchasing a pair of gloves I carelessly asked the beetle-browed proprietor how long the bill had been in the window. He eyed us narrowly, suspiciously, answering with caution—

"Not so very long. Perhaps you've found it?"

"Oh dear, no! Nothing so fortunate!" I replied, with a remarkably pleasant smile, for I thought that I was very likely to do so.

And we walked to Euston Terminus, went on a quiet stroll round cabs and carriages, and our object being to escape more notice than was absolutely necessary, we were so extremely careful and so intent on our purpose we did not discover that one of the police had been for some time upon our track. The man laid a hand upon Williams' shoulder, which that worthy forcibly resented. I had to explain, and our annoyance was such we took a stroll round Regent's Park instead.

Caught in a tree of diminutive size we noticed something white; now when engaged in sport of this kind it is well to adhere to the rule that nothing can be overlooked. So we proceeded to disentangle the shred of paper, which, by the way, looked uncommonly like a banknote.

It was not. Merely an engraver's proof, although what of I am unable to say. Which reminds me of the trial *re* Davis, where a judgment was given in the plaintiff's favour, he, an engraver, having sued the defendant for £15, amount of account for engraving certain designs for banknotes and other papers connected with the Bancho Industrial do Porto. The designs did not realize the ideal of the defendant by a long way. That which he had taken some pains to draught as a statue of Minerva came out in the engraving "A snake curling out of a flower-pot!" Something evidently wrong there! Another sketch—this time a marine view with fine sunset, could only be compared, said the learned counsel, to "A ship going down head foremost in a calm sea, with a lot of little boats like a yacht race, and the sun above an explosion of fireworks." Must have been something wrong about that also!

"Take this, Williams, place it carefully in the pocket-book, it may have value as an old engraving!"

"Excuse me, sir," said Williams, scrutinizing it disparagingly, "this is only the picture on a

baker's flour-bag!" And we walked away more discontentedly than ever.

Our next piece of fortune was to find a portion of some unwieldy iron instrument, which I could neither understand the use of nor carry away. Men had been mending the roads, and the handle of this having broken they had placed it under hiding of the shrubs waiting removal. Williams informed me it was a mattock. Mr. Walker who "did a dictionary" describes that elegant tool as "a toothed instrument," which, albeit a picturesque and dentally instructive definition, is rather vague. Mr. Williams thought it best to leave it where it was, indeed to discard the iron question altogether; and as Williams had the trouble of portering the cargo it was a matter of some interest to the worthy fellow.

"Gold and diamond crosses, that's what we want," I muttered grimly, the trinket sitting heavily upon my soul. At the outset we thought we might find it. People are always thinking things: it is astonishing the quiet death most of these thought-things die. It is comparatively easy to originate either a notion or commotion, but quite another matter dragging the original through.

Moralizing again! I declare this is almost a sentimental journey. And our moralities are something like the immortal children of Reading Churchyard, of whom we read, *Beneath this stone lie two children dear, one buried at Ramsgate and the other here!*

Well, to my record, which is about to turn dramatic. We abandoned operations until evening, and when dusk had fallen, and the number of pedestrians as usual had augmented, we ventured upon a tour in the East.

I had not explained my designs, but intended making a round of certain districts adjoining the water-side, possessed partly by my old reliance upon the water, partly with a curious sort of interest in the locality I proposed to explore.

When we turned off from Smithfield into a musical track known as Nightingale Lane—where, however, the music is not exactly of nightingales—Mr. Williams, who is rather particular where he goes, took exception to this esplanade. But having discoursed to him upon the energy and abandon of all great explorers, I induced him to depart from his prejudice, and accompany me upon that which might prove the crowning success of our quest.

An ancient overcoat, a hat which might have belonged to the Palmers, a stout cudgel that had figured in many a foray, and a pocket furnished with coppers, completed the equipment. It might prove a venture of hazard, for the district was neither delectable nor respectable.

We passed strange marts; marine-store, old curiosity, and plunder-receiving houses combined. In the windows were all things, from flat-irons and teapots to paws of tawny forest monarchs and plumage of rare birds. Sale or exchange—folks of this labyrinth of lanes were not particular how they transacted their business.

An amphibious tract, with a population of river, canal and seamen, mixed up with a wonderful race composed of the lower strata of all nationalities, a region of excitement, a network of wonders.

Skirting a weird place they called "The Basin"—which reminded me uncommonly of Charybdis—

we threaded Great Hermitage Street, speculating upon the vagaries of nomenclature; Globe Street, Wapping, upon which classic soil we stood, like the Irishman, with "mingled awe and riverine;" here were chaste sites immediately at hand, adjoining Hermitage Stairs, Brown's Quay, Union Stairs, the famous Wapping Old Stairs, and the Bell Dock.

"I have always held it well, Williams, to visit the celebrated shrines of our country; it is the Englishman's duty."

"Only there's a degree o' sweetness about some shrines not noticeable here, sir, begging your pardon!"

"I never saw such an obstinate fellow as you are! You've no regard for the odour of antiquity!"

"Not much, sir," with a distasteful sniff.

Oil-lamps and tallow-candles seemed the prevailing illumination, and these made the low-pitched stores look yet more ghastly.

The courts were prolific in young, who, like youth of the alligator tribe, sported half in and half out of the muddy water. In many of the alleys these engineers had constructed isthmuses and straits, over which they straddled, laid down by, sat with their feet in, and stood on their heads in, ate their supper in, sailed to fetch the beer on, and to possess which there were naval conflicts in abundance.

The ladies of this region succeeded in exciting Mr. Williams' unmitigated disgust; and they did, in truth, make themselves very much more unpleasant than do the ladies of fashionable watering places generally.

We came upon a scrap of wharf as deserted as some plateau of the Cordilleras, and windy as a sandbank in March. We stood at the very edge of the sullen water, rugged timbering and plankage, encrusted with curious growth, looking like the battlements of some city long sunk below the waves. No light hereabout, but a necklet of amber upon the dusky bosom of the Thames. A red light at the window of a tavern, a ghostly barge plying silently, and—suddenly Williams laid a hand upon my arm.

"Look there!" he said, pointing to a gloomy recess in the timber just above high-water mark.

I looked in the direction pointed out. There, caught or entangled by the oozy timber, was a mysterious bundle. Now, we had avoided bundles; one never knows what a bundle contains. Bundles have got no end of people into trouble: I was resolved upon not being one of them, and I suggested our leaving it in undisturbed security.

"I don't know, sir, begging your pardon; I think my master would have it out."

That was sufficient. Williams knew the protest to be unanswerable.

It was an awkward undertaking, but after clambering the slippery timbers at the imminent risk of breaking our necks, we contrived to secure the prize.

Mr. Williams bore it off triumphantly upon the point of a stick. We had threaded several narrow lanes, only waiting the opportunity to unloosen it, when to my horror I saw it move. The tableau of Tom Thumb done up in the classic pudding-cloth was realized. I said solemnly to my assistant, "Either you are jerking that about in an odd fashion, or else the thing is alive!"

Williams dropped bundle and stick as though the latter had been red hot.

"Let's take it back," he whispered tremulously, "and open it by the waterside!"

I shook my head.

"Such a course may lead to a terrible predicament; we must take it home."

"And bury it in the back gardening!" added Williams, looking livid, for the bundle was rolling over and over, now on end like an egg, now spinning like a top.

I don't know why, but we thought it best to clear that region with as quick despatch as possible, although our mission was but half accomplished. So in order of procession thus—the bundle, the stick, the hand, Mr. Williams, myself—we pursued our memorable retreat.

The popular theory seemed to be that we were taking something home for supper. Never shall I forget that walk.

Once at home, door locked, key-hole covered, the great and delicate work of unloosing the bundle was put into execution.

At the first untied piece of string the expanding of the wrapper caused a low cry to proceed from the bundle.

We started back aghast, and Mr. Williams at once shuffled towards the door. "I hope you'll excuse me, sir, but these sort o' wagers are quite out o' my line! I'm sorry to leave you, but I'm strongly opinioned they'll bring us into trouble! You see, sir, I'm doubtful about the contents o' that there bundle."

"But you'll never leave it on my hands, man!" cried I, with hushed excitement and thorough alarm. "Why, had it not been for you it would not be here now!" Mr. Williams looked as though he deprecated so strong a share of the responsibility. "I wish we had some way of transferring this to your master's beat, you say he's attached to this sort of thing." Williams looked inexpressibly shocked.

Coming close beside me, losing for once the habitual respect, he proposed in a hollow whisper, "Let's drop it out of the window into the dustbin!"

"What, and get the poor maids into trouble—Williams, I'm ashamed of you! No, I will abide by your venture, the parcel must be opened!"

Seeing no alternative, Williams gingerly touched the linsey-wolsey skirt in which the thing was found enwrapped after removing the saturated brown paper. This fabric, my Manchester friends tell me, retains its oiliness under any circumstances; to which fact may be attributed the preservation of the creature's life, the conditions of its discovery in that shocking form pointing irremediably to murder.

With caution, with the tongs, with silence, we shook the roll open, and as it unwound our trepidation exceeded description.

"Listen by the door, if any one comes keep silent!" With these hurried instructions to my companion in iniquity, I gave the thing a gentle kick. It rolled over in the direction of Williams, who avoided it by a bound. The critical moment approached. The last fold was displaced, and there—struggling, blinking at the chandelier, shaking itself, fluffing its magnificent tail, was disclosed a fine and uninjured cat.

The very means taken to render its execution

both effective and agreeable had been instrumental in saving its life, or one of its lives. Mr. Williams and myself joined in a hearty peal of laughter over our living foundling, in whose interests the best services of the dairyman were immediately secured. The shock, however, of the preliminary terrors so disorganized the method of my proceedings, I relinquished my share in the contest therewith, and the handsome quadruped now asleep upon my study tiger-skin, a brilliant shaft of sunshine blending the many colours of their coats and making of it the most attractive picture in the room, is all I have to show for our Singular Wager.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholm."

PART III. (continued).

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND TIME.

IT was late in the afternoon when Kate Dilworth and her companion, having made the circuit of Elmrigg, rode past the little inn kept by James and Jane Dodd.

The Red Cow was a rustic-looking house with a porch on the road-side, made beautiful by clinging creepers. It had a second entrance at the side, where a flower garden ran down to a point between the road and the river; this was the private door, reserved for the use of the little household and the lodgers, who sometimes occupied Jane Dodd's rooms in summer time. The gate into the garden was open, and Kate, as was her frequent custom, rode up the gravel foot-path to the door to speak to Jane Dodd, and ask for a glass of milk. Jack Langford remained in the road, talking to a tenant who had met and addressed him.

"You'll come in and see the baby, won't you, Miss Dilworth?" Jane Dodd inquired, as she brought the milk; "she's not been herself like these two days; I think I ought to let the doctor see her; if you'll go forward I'll call some one to hold the horse."

Kate sprang to the ground and went in; she was followed immediately by Jane Dodd, and some minutes were spent in looking at the baby and hearing the account of its ailments. Kate had never adopted the character of Lady Bountiful, but she was on very friendly terms with some of the dales-people who had been thrown in her way, especially those who had been in her aunt's service. They were all impressed by her distinguished manner and her airs of decision, and were inclined to believe that her advice was good on all subjects, from toothache to the fittest names for the new babies, and the prices they ought to ask for their rooms in the season. Kate was always willing to give a weighty opinion on one side or another to the problems presented for her solution; but she was not disposed to originate general advice.

"I should have the tooth out by all means," or, "I don't think you'll get a guinea for this sitting-room," being the extent of her discourse on such occasions; the manner, however, in which it was delivered, caused it to be generally received as the conclusive utterance of a great authority. She gave her opinion now promptly.

"The doctor is visiting at the Broadhurst's, just above, I know; you had better get him to look at the baby the next time he comes."

"Well, I'm glad you came past to-day," Jane discoursed, as she accompanied her visitor to the door; "as I said to James, I don't like to let things go too long. And how is Miss Leake? Quite well, I hope; and Mrs. Dewhurst, too?"

When they reached the garden, Kate's horse was standing by the door, the stranger of the morning holding it, and stroking its neck, as he looked at it with interested eyes.

"Thank you," said Kate, with a bright smile of recognition; "I am sorry to have troubled you."

He helped her to mount, then he stood still, with his grave look of observation, which made her again fancy that he had something to say. His grey hairs, his striking appearance—which was uncommon without being exactly distinguished—inclined her to treat him with especial consideration. He seemed to her a superior man in an inferior rank of life; and she was inspired to show him the respect which he appeared to her to merit, the respect of the young for the old, of the thoughtless beginner in life for the well-tried veteran, who bears in his face the marks of a long battle not ignobly fought. It was not exactly the respect which she would have shown to an old man in her own position, not at all the respect which she intended to show to her father; *that* would be full of humility and reverence; while this was inspired by a kindly consciousness of her own advantages. She wished to put this stranger entirely at his ease, not to awaken in him any perception of his deficiencies. In the presence of her father she would have desired to please in quite another sense; to satisfy *him*, to meet *his* idea would have been her aspiration.

And the difference of her manner was significantly felt by Henry Dilworth. His mind had been awakened to the finer shades of thought, and its expression in tone and manner, by his own strong feeling and anxious desire on her behalf. He was aware that this bright young girl was pleasantly polite to him as to one out of her own sphere, one who would never for a moment presume to judge or influence her in return for the gracious friendliness she showed to him.

None of all this thought was, however, to be seen in his face as he looked at her with his serious eyes; and then, glancing away to the horse, observed—

"It is a fine animal. Are you fond of riding?"

"Very fond of it."

"Have you been round Elmrigg this morning?"

"Yes. Do you know the road?"

"Very well. It is a bad road. You cannot be a timid rider."

"No," she answered a little proudly; "I hope I am not timid in anything," for courage was a quality which she had cherished with secret self-congratulation. She felt that it was a virtue her father would require and approve of.

"You are not like your mother in one respect

then," he said quietly; "she did not like riding."

Kate's face flushed a little as at a personal accusation.

"You knew my mother?"

He turned his eyes to her again with a look she could not understand; it was full of a subdued sadness, of a feeling which had been content to exist long without speech, which had perhaps never known how to utter itself; and he gave her one of those straightforward yet unsatisfactory replies, of which she had already received several from him.

"Yes, I knew her."

Kate looked down at her horse and stroked it; she was interested, yet embarrassed.

"My mother was very timid; she did not like riding, or anything which required nerve," she said in a low voice, as if it were treason to speak in this way, while yet a stronger curiosity impelled her to pursue the subject.

"No, she was very timid—and gentle," he said, with a sigh which she could not know to be one of regretful remembrance.

She looked up at him quickly, with a new idea in her mind.

"You like timidity and gentleness?" she asked.

"I know that some persons think them the most womanly qualities."

"They were very beautiful and most womanly in your mother."

Kate's horse reared a little, and pawed the ground, but it was because she had made an impatient movement of the bridle; she was thinking to herself, "All men do not approve of courage in women; my father chose my mother and married her; perhaps he admired timidity and weakness; Aunt Susie says all strong men like the qualities they have not got themselves; perhaps he would think me bold and unwomanly. But no, no, when I am so only that I may live *his* sort of life and be a help to him, he cannot think it. And a daughter is not like a wife; I don't care if other men, men who want wives, don't approve of me; it is my father whom I hope to please."

All this flashed through her mind instantaneously. Her love of her father, her desire to go to him, having been so long subdued and silenced by those around her, had ended by taking possession of her mind like a passion. The dream of a life with him, a dream which she was not permitted to entertain openly, shaped all her thoughts, and influenced all her actions. Every new light which was thrown upon life brought his image into her mind and affected her as she fancied it might affect her relationship with him.

She was silent only a moment, and then she said dreamily—

"You knew my mother, I suppose, when she was young and very pretty."

"Pretty!" he repeated in surprise. It seemed a poor word to use in describing the woman who had awakened in him such reverential tenderness, whose love was the sweetest and most wonderful memory of his life, "No, I never thought her pretty."

There was some vague reproof in his tone which Kate did not understand. It could not occur to her that the epithet seemed trifling in her life as applied to the woman who had been his wife and her mother. She had been accustomed to hear

her mother spoken of in this way, as something slight, sweet, and helpless. How could she dream of all that this man had imagined her to be, all that he would have helped her to become if the chance had been given to him?

"I always understood that every one found her so," she replied with a shade—almost imperceptible—of haughtiness in her manner.

She was thinking that perhaps she had been wrong in permitting this stranger to speak of her own family. But he was not abashed by her tone; he even looked at her with something of dignified rebuke as he answered—

"She was sweetness itself, if you mean that."

She turned her horse round towards the gate with a little air of vexation. She did not understand the situation, and did not like it. The stranger watched her still with his gravely observant look, which softened after a moment into sympathy. She was so young, and evidently so innocent of intentional wrong-doing or saying that he could not blame her seriously. She merely repeated what she had been told by others; that was apparent.

He put his hand on her reins for a moment, and spoke with a certain air of gentle authority.

"If any one has taught you to think slightly of your mother, don't allow yourself to do it. She deserved your love and reverence."

Kate drew back haughtily.

"Sir," she said with head erect and a proud glance, "what right have you to suppose that I need such advice about my mother? or to give it if I do?"

He looked bewildered for a moment; then an expression of disappointment that was not humiliation came over his face; something that was half remembrance, half regret.

"It is true," he said, "I beg your pardon," and he stood back on the grass to let her pass.

She touched her horse with the whip, and with a silent bow to him rode out through the gate. Jane Dodd had gone back to her baby at the beginning of the interview; for the greater part of it Jack Langford had waited outside the garden, watching with close interest and a determination not to interfere.

"Well?" he said when she came out to him, looking flushed and displeased.

"Let us go home," was her answer.

"Is that all? Have you quarrelled with your new friend?"

"He is not my friend, and I should not quarrel with a stranger."

Having received this rebuke Jack said no more, but he thought his own thoughts as they rode home together.

CHAPTER V.

NIECE AND DAUGHTER.

THE family at the Stepping Stones consisted now of Kate and two aunts, one of whom—Susie—was still unmarried and the other a childless widow. The third aunt—Ellen—had died some years before. It was she who had been the charitable one of the household, who had visited the poor and shown a faint tendency (much chilled by Susie) to distribute soup and tracts. A few of

her special pensioners still hung about the place, and transferred their demands to Kate.

Miss Leake permitted her niece to be benevolent to a limited degree, but would have been greatly displeased had she desired to erect charity into a serious pursuit. Kate had been educated, and she was carefully kept free for marriage, although this end and aim of her existence had never been disclosed to her. A certain amount of benevolent interest in the poor people who were thrown in her way seemed to Miss Leake a proper part of a young girl's character. But she was not permitted to seek out those who required help, nor to visit them in any organized or methodical fashion. The vicar of the place would gladly have enlisted the intelligent energy of Miss Dilworth in the service of his parish, but Miss Leake permitted nothing of the sort; and the young lady's own dreams and ambitions were turned in quite another direction. She was allowed to humour a few sick people, who regarded it as an honour to see the young lady by their bedsides; and she was permitted to stand as godmother to the cottagers' babies, when ambitious parents desired to secure this distinction for their offspring. She was very popular among the poorer people, having that commanding presence and slight haughtiness of manner which enhanced the value of her affability and kindness.

Miss Leake had never been so much liked by her humbler neighbours; she was not naturally fitted to make a good country lady; for, with all her cleverness, she was very narrow, and could never expand into the genial neighbourliness of a true daleswoman. She had so many little precepts and proprieties, that she could not happily extend her acquaintance into circles not her own; she was formed for an artificial life where, in the midst of numbers, she could conduct her own household on its own basis, keeping it separate and alone. That comparative solitude of Elmdale which permitted existence, so to speak, to run out in straggling edges instead of being confined in the strict circles of town life—where every one must revolve round his own natural centre or be lost in the vortex—this solitude and freedom only signified difficulty and danger to Miss Leake. She would have liked to apply the little rules of life here as closely as in London itself.

She had not been brought up in the country, and had no taste for it. The Stepping Stones came to her as a legacy from a relative of her mother's, and it had made a suitable retreat for the family on the death of its head. Miss Leake had been happy enough there, but she made her happiness out of family interests and social connections.

After the death of her youngest sister, Kate had become the great care of her life. The brother in India was a bachelor; Anna, her second sister, after a married life of some years, came back to the Stepping Stones a childless widow. She was ready to submit to the amiable tyranny of her elder sister as she had done when a girl, and she fell at once into her old subordinate position.

Robert, the brother in London, had many children; but his wife was a fashionable, showy sort of woman, who managed her own affairs and brooked no interference. The London nephews and niece, who were also fond of showy things and followed novelties in taste and opinion briskly,

engaged a very small portion of Aunt Susie's affections.

Kate was the solitary one of the second generation on whom she could pour the affectionate interest so abundantly required by the first. And Kate had been, and was still, a considerable cause of anxiety. She had so much "spirit," as her friends called it, and was not easily induced to give up an idea once adopted. She was never saucy, as the first Kate had been, yet she was more difficult to manage. She was apt to yield in small points and to remain fixed on larger ones, so that she could not be led blindly up any road while amusing herself with the details of it as the first Kate, and also Agnes, had done. These two had indulged in fancies and caprices about the trifles of life, but its greater questions they had not troubled to think out for themselves. Cruel circumstances had brought their happy prospects to a disastrous end, and now Miss Leake was left once more to build up a prosperous life for a young creature, and this time for one of a far less facile disposition than her first darling had been.

The existence of Henry Dilworth in his far-away home was a great difficulty in her path. A father, though unseen, could not fail to be an influence on his daughter's life; and it did not suit Miss Leake's ideas, nor agree with her principles, to nourish disrespectful thoughts of her brother-in-law in her niece's mind. She herself spoke of him always with profound respect, as a remarkable man, who was doing great and distinguished service for science in other lands. She encouraged Kate to believe that she might reasonably be proud of her father, and those slighting thoughts of him which Kate had guessed at were never intentionally revealed. Nevertheless, her representation of Henry Dilworth's character did him signal injustice; for it depicted him as indifferent to domestic ties, and cold in personal affections. She spoke as if a young girl, even one who was his daughter, could awake but a trifling feeling of interest in a man absorbed in pursuits which influenced the world. Her talk of him was a continual suggestion of the small amount of thought which he could give to Kate, and the danger of her becoming a burden upon his actions, or a drag on his career. She expressed her desire that Kate should not make him anxious; that she should speak of herself always as happy and satisfied with her present life. It was her continual dread that he might return to England and claim his daughter, which event would have been, in her idea, as fatal to Kate's happiness, as his marriage had been fatal to her mother's. She felt that his return would matter less after Kate was married, and safely settled at home; therefore, every year of his absence was a year of reprieve and of hope. Her letters to him, polite and formal as they were, breathed this idea from beginning to end. It was evident to him that she feared his return as a danger to his daughter's peace of mind, that she looked upon his absence as a security for her happiness. There was an unspoken appeal to him in all she wrote, which seemed to say "Do not spoil this second young life, as you did the first, by your mistaken love."

And, when he read his daughter's letters, he found in them no contradiction of her aunt's belief. He was a stranger to his child; and she had the awkward timidity as well as the proud reserve of

youth. She always waited for him to want her, to speak the first word, and she would be ready enough to respond to his appeal. But she would never force herself upon him, never mar his career and baffle his ambition as her aunt had implied that she might do by indiscreet expression of her desires. She would wait, and keep herself free; that was all she could do. Meanwhile she fed upon dreams, which were a poor preparation for the reality. She thought of her father as a hero, misunderstood and unappreciated; and she was ready to throw herself at his feet in ardent self-sacrifice. Simply to make his acquaintance in common-place fashion, to humour his habits, to condone his peculiarities, these were things for which she was more unready than she imagined. It seemed to Miss Leake that fortune favoured her plans in decreeing the existence of a second Jack Langford in Elmdale. He was the nephew of the first, the head of the family, and the owner of a good estate at her very door. He had been named after his uncle, who had been his godfather; and he was a few years older than Kate. As a family connection he was admitted at the Stepping Stones on a very intimate footing, and he was Kate's most frequent companion in her morning rides. Miss Leake held that it was ridiculous to keep a saddle horse for her niece, as long as she had no brother or father to ride with her; but the horse had been given by the uncle from India, during a two years' visit to England. He had taken a great fancy to Kate, and made her his principal companion during his stay with his sisters. They explored the valleys and scoured the hills together, and after he left England, the horse which he had bought for Kate was still kept in the stable. Miss Leake regarded its presence with a secret indulgence, because it was the pretext for many mornings spent together by Jack and Kate. Their connection was so well known in the valley that their frequent companionship seemed natural to every one, and excited little remark.

Nevertheless, Miss Leake hoped that the intercourse would end in a marriage, and such a marriage must ensure Kate's social safety, and render Henry Dilworth's influence harmless.

"So very suitable, you know," she said to her sister Anna when they talked the matter over.

"Nothing could be more suitable," said Mrs. Dewhurst with emphasis.

Young Jack Langford, for his part, was quite willing to fulfil the expectations he had excited. Nothing would have pleased him better than to marry Kate and to establish her for life in Elmdale. He told her so, and occasioned in this way their first quarrel. She chose to be offended at the idea, and he felt disappointed and hurt at her refusal of himself. Thereupon he forsook Elmdale for a time, and strove to enlarge his mind and mitigate his affliction by travel. He made his will in Kate's favour after the most approved fashion of disconsolate lovers, and thought of joining her father in the wilds of Australia.

The civilization of Europe satisfied him, however, and he returned to Elmdale to see if Kate hadn't changed her mind. There was a little awkwardness on their first meeting, but in a few weeks they were surprised to find themselves as good friends as ever, and thereupon Jack proposed a truce.

"I can go on intending to marry you, if you'll

have me, and you can go on intending to live with your father, if he'll have you. One of us must be disappointed—probably both; but we needn't quarrel meantime."

So the situation remained.

Miss Leake had been much disappointed by her niece's refusal of Mr. Langford's offer, but she had not felt it safe to press her advice on the wilful girl, lest she might create a grievance sufficiently large to be communicated to Henry Dilworth. She was proportionately relieved when the young people drifted back to their old terms of intimacy, and made up their quarrel. It could only end one way, she thought, however long it might take Kate to make up her mind.

Jack Langford tried occasionally to better his position with Kate. As a very happy thought, he proposed that she should marry him, and he should take her out to her father. But she would not listen even to this tempting offer.

"I want to give my life to him, not to pay him a visit," she replied with decision.

(To be continued.)

JUNE.

JUNE in the woods,
Where the airs are sweet,
And the wild white buds
Burst beside our feet,
And the children play,
And the stream flows down,
With its song, all day
To the summer town.

June on the hills,
Where the winds are soft,
And the wild bird shrills
In the clouds aloft,
And the distant drone
Of the city's toot
On the peaks, and blown
By the breeze, and lost.

June in the fields,
Where the corn is green,
And the poppy yields,
A red harvest e'en,
And the by-paths run
To the stiles grown grey,
And at set of sun
All the lovers stray.

June in the street,
Where the noon looks down
In its summer heat
On the great old town,
And the walls are high,
And the ways confin'd,
And there's little sky,
And but little wind.

June in the rooms
Where the shop-girls sew—
In the fourth-floor glooms
Where consumptives grow,

And the hours are long,
And the wage not much;
And of weak and strong
There are many such.

June in the ward
Where the pulse is weak,
And the nigh-spent cord
Pales the hectic cheek,
And the breaking soul's
Throbbing wild and high,
While the music rolls
Through the summer sky!

June on the world—
It is June right round;
With its white clouds furl'd,
And its days of sound;
Where the turf is starr'd,
Where the street is bare,
Where the life is hard—
It is June e'en there!

WILLIAM TWANLEY.

THE POET TIPPOO.

WHAT the name of the Nana was a quarter of a century ago, the name of Tippoo was in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the embodiment of everything cruel and ferocious. Doubtless he appeared outside shows as the Nana did, a fearful figure with rolling eyes, huge teeth and bristly beard. The association of a black man and this fierce Sultan was so engrained into the London mind that when, some years later, the amiable Raja Rammohun Roy appeared in our streets, the small boys followed him shouting "Tippoo."

The name Tippoo seems an odd one for a Mussulman prince, but it appears that in the Canarese language, the word means *tiger*, and that it was a nickname given out of awe or respect to a celebrated Mahommedan peer or saint, whose tomb is now in Arcot. To this devotee and thaumaturge, Hyder Alee paid a great honour, and bestowed his name on his own eldest son. In a former number it was mentioned that the last of the Moghuls was a poet, but this haughty and cruel Sultan, Tippoo, also trifled with the muse. The French *savant*, M. Garcin de Tassy, mentions a volume of poems from his pen, entitled *The Joy of Hearts*, in the Deccanee language; as also two Persian volumes, *The Book of Commandments* and the *Emerald*, which latter is a work on astrology. It is rather interesting to find traces of the humanities in these historical monsters, who are unintelligible when only daubed with black for sin and red for blood. It was the study of human nature that made Shakespeare improve the shapeless atrocity of Barabas into that Shylock who, avaricious and revengeful as he was, could still say of idle, much-eating Launcelot, "The patch is kind enough."

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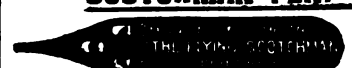
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VOL. II. No. 25.]

LONDON: JUNE 20, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A TIME OF DANGER.

BY PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM a member, and hope I may long remain one, of what is known as the "Once a Week Club." It is so called because the members of it meet once a week at a little restaurant in Soho, for the purpose of dining together, while those who have not money to dine stay away. I regret to say that this not infrequently happens, for we are all Bohemians, living by pen, or brush, or anything out of which we can turn an honest pound. Of course some of us are much better off than others—some having reached comparative wealth and distinction.

For instance, one of our head men, a painter, exhibited pictures at galleries, received honourable mention from the press, wore a fine velvet coat (not velveteen), had cut the old chambers long ago, lived in a house all to himself, and had servants, and sometimes gave a dinner to a few of his old pals. On the other hand, there was poor little Jones, who lived up three flights of dirty, uncarpeted stairs. He was always in difficulties, and never looked as if he had had a good meal. For myself I was in what might be called the middle class. I had a very little money left to me by my father. I lived very quietly and eked out my income by writing stories for the magazines and journals, which were sometimes accepted and sometimes refused.

I was longing for a rest from the necessity of making plots, when I saw something which I was very full of, on this particular Saturday, when, having completed a tale I was then engaged upon, I took my way to the restaurant where the Saturday dinners were held. I was glad to reach my destination, for it was a cruel January night, snow

falling fast, and a virulent east wind driving it in your face, so that you could hardly see. Even the London streets that night were sparsely dotted with wayfarers. Most of the shops had closed, seeing that they stood a poor chance of doing any business. But if things looked cheerless outside, they looked cheerful enough inside the restaurant. A great red-hearted fire blazed at the end of the long apartment, and near it was our table set.

"Why is everybody so late?" asked Mason discontentedly as I came up and held out my hands to the fire.

He was a large man with a somewhat hoarse voice, supposed to be the least amiable member of the club, but very clever. He might have been about forty.

"Bad weather, I suppose," was my rejoinder. "Makes walking difficult. But here come Squire, Evans and Langley, and on their heels Blackshore and Felton. We shall soon be complete now."

"Good evening, friends," said Evans, coming up and resting his back against the mantelpiece. He was a handsome fellow, with a most bland and urbane manner, and an unusually low musical voice.

"I think it shows great devotion to the cause to venture out a night like this," he went on, wiping the snow from his black, long, flowing beard.

"Will Jones be here to night?" he added, turning to Mason.

"No," he won't," returned that gentleman shortly.

"And why not?" questioned the genial Squire.

"Because, being out of work, he's out of funds, and is doing the economic."

"Don't wait for me, gentlemen," said Evans, putting on his coat which he had only the minute before thrown aside. "It's only twelve doors down the street where he lives, and I can't have poor little Jones left out on a night like this. I meant to have asked the fellow as my guest, but it escaped my wretched memory."

So saying he went, and in a few minutes re-

turned with little Jones, whom he had rescued from a dinner of bread and cheese and cold water. Two or three other men came in, and, all being hungry, were very glad to fall to.

I have dwelt at a little length upon the "Once a Week Club" and this particular evening, because they were to be always associated in my mind with the adventures I shall soon have to narrate. When the meal was concluded, and the pipes lit, I took advantage of a pause in the conversation to say—

"Friends, I am thinking of taking to a new business."

There was a general buzz of interest.

"I know what it is," said Mason with a hoarse laugh; "he's going about with a street piano, and will reel off other people's music instead of his own fiction, which certainly *will* be a gain."

"No; I know what it is," said Jones; "he's going to write his autobiography."

"But he hasn't got one to write," objected Mason.

"Perhaps," said a third, "he's going to write the adventures of the 'Once a Week Club.'"

"As related to him by its elder members," remarked Evans, with a good-natured smile (I was the youngest member). "But chaffing apart, man, what is it that you are thinking of?"

"Of turning a steward," I replied; and handed round for inspection an advertisement cut from a week-old paper, which had only that day come under my notice. It ran as follows:—

"A lady is desirous of procuring the services of an efficient steward, to manage a not very large but valuable property. Terms: three hundred pounds per annum. A personal interview indispensable. Address—Miss Churchill, Grove House, Locksley, near Kingstown-on-Sea, Readmonshire."

When the advertisement had been read, there was a great hearty laugh, in which, nothing loth, I joined myself, for there did seem to me something comic in such a person as I was trying to fill such a position.

"You'll have to evict, you know," said one man.

"It's to be hoped," said another, "you will prove a faithful steward, and not hide your talents away in a napkin."

"Have you an adequate knowledge of figures?" inquired one of the members with whom I was least well acquainted.

He was a serene man with a shining bald head, who always addressed himself to the practical side of things, and could see a joke no more than a Scotchman. I replied that I thought I could get along well enough.

"I should doubt your looking old enough for such a post," he continued; "but," he added, as one pondering the question gravely, "Miss Churchill may be a lady advanced in years, who desires to have young people about her. That is quite possible."

"I hope it may prove so," I replied.

The point which had occurred to the member with whom I had just interchanged words, had, I confess, occurred to me also. Alas! I was young, being only twenty-three, and I looked barely twenty; a fact which greatly troubled a certain young lady who happened to be two years my senior.

"I declare," she would cry, eying me ruefully, "you look only a boy!"

"Then why do you have anything to say to a boy?" I would ask, with a laugh.

"Well, indeed, I shouldn't if I didn't know you were really older than you look!" and then kisses would close the amicable altercation.

When we left, most of the members to make a night of it elsewhere, I forswore my usual late proclivities, and returned to my rooms to write letters, and set things in order; for my mind was made up to start for Grove House on Monday.

The next day I passed at Hampstead with a certain young lady and her mother. For a while, I kept my news to myself, and when the early Sunday dinner had been disposed of, and Mr. Rivers, for such was the young lady's mother's name, had fallen asleep in her armchair, and I was fondly stroking the bright hair of some one curled up on the hearthrug, I came out with the facts. It was twilight-time, and we could see the snow drifting down before the window like white wings.

"Sweetheart," I began, "I am going a long way off to-morrow, almost to the end of Readmonshire."

"John!" she exclaimed.

"It is but too true, and I may not come back for a long time." And then I unfolded my plans; but it was long before I could bring her to see the efficacy of them.

The tea, when it came, with the fragrance of that beverage and steam of hot cakes, supposed to be seasonable at that time of the year, was a less festive meal than usual.

We tried our best to be cheerful, but we tried under difficulties, and did not make a very good thing of it. I lingered late, and as I went out into the wind and snow, my heart smote me when I thought of how long it might be before I saw Grace again; but I would not turn back.

I slept badly that night, but fell asleep in the early hours of morning, and waking with a start, glanced at my watch to find I had only just time to catch my train, which left at six-fifteen. Fortunately, and oddly enough, I am a methodical man, and whenever I travel I make it a point to lock and strap my portmanteau over night, putting into my bag what things I shall need for the night, along with a portable dressing-case. There was no time for breakfast, but while I dressed I ate a biscuit, and swallowed a little brandy and water. I took my portmanteau because, in the most likely event of my services not been required, I was resolved, being on the spot, to spend some time in the neighbourhood. For little was known to the general public of that part, and I had no doubt of being able to pay my weekly expenses by writing about it. With a light heart I ran downstairs, called a sleepy cabman, and was driven to the station; and the first person I saw as I hurried along the platform was Grace.

"Ah, here you are," she said; "I thought you would be too late, and oh! I *did* so hope you would be." And the tears shone in her eyes, though the sweet lips tried to smile. "Mamma was sure you would be too late for breakfast, so she put you up some sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs. Oh! how lonely I shall be when I don't see you; you will write every day, won't you?"

"Yes, my love, of course I will. You must do the same, and remember half-past five for the country, and six with an extra stamp, but you will always be safer to post at five."

Now all this was said in a breath.

"Oh, my darling, how sweet of you to come!"

"It will seem a long day."

"Yes, my poor pet, but long for both of us. My thoughts will be hurrying back to you, as yours I know will be hurrying after me."

"Take your seats, please," cried the inexorable guard.

One desperate last kiss, then I leaped into a second-class smoking-carriage.

The door was slammed-to, the whistle sounded, the trucks wheeled away, and we were off. I strained my head out of the window to see the last of Grace. To the last she waved her handkerchief.

Straining of eyes, and stretching of hands,
And the trifles that make and mar;
These things must happen in all the lands,
And things must be as they are.

Ah me! for the sad partings as well as the glad meetings that our railway stations witness.

The compartment in which I found myself was quite full; all the men were smoking, and all looked cross except two, who were keeping up an animated discussion upon the condition of the country in general. I thought of Grace, and started violently, fancying she had just spoken to me. I had fallen into one of those shallow sleeps which can just start, but cannot float a dream.

We were rushing along at tremendous speed. The country looked ghastly in its covering of snow. The two men were still talking, and one was almost screaming out, so as to be heard above the roar of the train.

"It's no good, say what you like, sir. The country must have the franchise. Mark me, I say *must*. It's a mighty wave, and do what you will, it can't be stopped."

"Yes," assented the other; and he seemed to me to have been quelled.

The other inmates of the compartment continued to look cross.

It was a long journey, it being three o'clock before we reached Battlebour. It was good to hear the guard call out in a way peculiar to railway guards—

"Battlebourer, Battlebourer. Change here for Endlestoke, Longmarsh, and Kingstown!"

It was bitterly cold, and the snow which had desisted for awhile was beginning to fall again. I found I should have to wait an hour; but fortunately there was a refreshment room with a good fire in it, and vivacious young persons behind the bar. There was a great bustle, and "the young ladies with figures" must have had hard work not to lose their tempers. The bell sounded, there was a rush for carriages, the train went on its way, and all was quiet again. I sat down by the fire to think of far-away London and "the girl I left behind me."

Presently a young man from Battlebour came in for a glass of sherry and bitters, and a flirtation with one of the vivacious young persons. Though my thoughts were far away, I could not help scraps of conversation like the following reaching me from time to time.

"I say, Miss Tyler, why didn't you meet me last night when you said you would. It was too bad, now really it was."

"Because I couldn't! there."

"Oh, I say, you know you had better say you wouldn't."

"Wouldn't then. Do you think I have nothing to do but meet you?"

"You oughtn't to have anything else to do if you have."

"Do you think *you* are the only man in the world?"

"No, I don't; but I wish I were, then I should have the pick of you dear creatures."

"Oh my, wouldn't you have your hands full." And "the young lady with a figure" laughed long and loudly at her own wit.

Then the voices sank to a whisper; and I knew nothing till I was recalled from Grace's presence by a voice shouting in, what seemed to me, tones of thunder—

"Now then for the Endlestoke, Longmarsh, and Kingstown train."

I caught up my bag and rug, and soon found myself in a very hard-seated, ill-lit compartment, after the manner of branch trains, proceeding to Kingstown; but the journey took a weary while, for the stations were far apart, and the train jogged slowly between them as if it were knocked-up, and stopped a long time at each as if reluctant to move on again, and our engine held whistle-intercourse with other engines that seemed to be counselling from a distance that we should not come on at all. This may have been only a fancy; anyhow it was a long time before the matter was settled, and we *did* move on, and at last steamed into the Kingstown Station. I left my portmanteau for the present in the cloak-room, and being informed that the Black Horse was the best hotel in the place, now that the fashionable summer hotels were closed, and having been fully directed, thither I bent my steps.

I have no doubt that in the summer season Kingstown is a veritable paradise, but oh! how forlorn it looked, as, having descended the hill, *that* hill on which stations are always built, I came into its chief street, which seemed to be shivering like myself. It was between five and six; many of the shops were closed. I passed an ill-lighted and very fifth-rate grocer's who advertised that he sold Pilbey's wines. It was so long since I had been out of London that I somehow fancied things would be different. I wonder what it was I did expect? Why should not people in Kingstown drink Pilbey's wines if they wanted? Having passed a few closed doors, I came to a ham and beef shop of the poorest description, with a lean cat in unpleasantly close proximity to the viands, untempting looking enough, I should have thought, to have repelled even it. I had suffered the grocer's, but I confess the ham and beef man made me indignant.

The street seemed given up to a few barking dogs, and boys who were snowballing one another, shouting or whistling shrilly. After the roar of London streets, there was something ghastly in this quiet, only broken by these noises. Soon I saw a bright patch of light ahead, which proved to be the Black Horse. It looked cheerful and comfortable enough, and, having partaken of a chop, I went to the smoking room, which I shared

with a man who seemed about my own age. He was reading the *Times* intently. I filled a churchwarden, and began smoking, but my head dropped forward, the pipe slipped from between my fingers and broke. I gave up the attempt at further smoking, called for my candle, and went to bed. I had hardly slept at all the last two nights, and now I craved for sleep, as it seems to me the flowers must crave for rain in times of drouth. Oh! the comfort it was to give myself up undividedly to sleep. Instantly I fell into a dream of Grace. Those who have but recently departed from their dearest will understand how the thought of her that day—awake, asleep—dominated every other thought.

CHAPTER II.

GROVE HOUSE.

I WAS only awakened by the "boots" knocking sharply on my door, and announcing hot water, and that it was eight o'clock, the hour at which I had desired him to call me. I sprang out of bed and dressed as expeditiously as possible, for now that I had slept well I was anxious to know the issue of my adventure. I made a satisfactory breakfast of ham and eggs, and then went to the post-office, where I had told Grace to write to me. A musty little place it was, and I thought how doubtless it was thronged in the season by impatient visitors. Yes, there was the dear handwriting! I blessed that post-office clerk as I took the letter from him lovingly.

Locksley, I heard was about three miles away, and the Grove House lay just outside of it. Thither, then, I set my face. There were a few carts moving about the streets, which made them look less utterly God-forsaken than on the previous night; and I saw a pretty servant-maid catering with a fishmonger, which made me feel quite hopeful. The snow had given over, and a grey sky looked down upon a white world.

As I walked along, the crisp snow crackling under my feet, I read my letter. It was a dear letter, commenced as soon as she had returned to Hampstead. She had been to see her really one intimate girl friend, because she was the only one to whom she could speak of me. They had got Bradshaw, and followed me in my progress from station to station. Ah, these women, these women! how little do we deserve their love!

How still the country was. So still that you could hear the delicate sound of snow falling from the twigs, or the murmur of running water which never freezes. Sometimes the report of a gun would startle the stillness, but that was all. Locksley, at which I speedily arrived, seemed a clean, wholesome little village. Evidently in that part of the country, and at that time of the year specially, strangers were rare, and I became at once the object of attention. I passed the "Three Bells," before which a cumbersome waggon with huge horses was drawn up, passed the one or two shops of the place, passed the roaring, blazing, clinking, clanging forge, ascended a hill with the village church perched on its summit, passed the church with its modest churchyard where—

The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

"The next house after you've gone about a quarter of a mile past the church; you can't miss it."

Such had been my directions. Yes, there it was, at least there were the great gates leading to it. Then I paused a moment to ask myself if I really desired the berth I had come so far in the hope of obtaining. I thought of the money I should be enabled to lay by, and hesitated no longer.

The great outer gate stood open, and I walked up what seemed to me an interminable avenue, till at last I came to an inner gate, where was a great bell which I made to sound, and which kept on sounding long after I had removed my hand from the handle. It was answered by a clamour of dogs. After some time, the gate swung back, and a man servant appeared. I gave him my card with the request that he would take it in to Miss Churchill. I followed him up a long path, with a lawn on either side, to what looked a stately enough house. I was left in the hall; however it was to all purposes a noble room, warmed by a blazing wood fire. It was solidly furnished. At one end of it stood an organ. How my hands longed to be upon the keys of it, for love of music with me amounts almost to a madness. I had not long to wait when the man reappeared, and bade me follow him. We went up one long winding staircase, descended another, traversed long corridors, passed through many doors, and at last stood before a room-door, across which a heavy curtain was drawn. The man drew the curtain aside, and knocked.

"Come in," said a low voice.

"Mr. Lechlie, if you please," said the man, announcing me. Then I knew that I was standing in a daintily furnished but small room. It was fragrant with the breath of hot-house flowers and the hardly less delicate odour of an excellent cigar. The scent of the flowers came from a great blue china vase, out of which they seemed to grow. The scent of the cigar from the lips of a man who was standing with his back to the fire. In a low chair by the table on which the flowers were, a lady was sitting. She at once rose, and said in a low, very attractive voice—

"Mr. Lechlie, I believe?"

I replied, "Yes;" and she asked me to be seated. Miss Churchill was, I should say, about twenty-seven. Perhaps she was in appearance more fascinating than strictly beautiful. She was about the average height, the figure beautifully moulded—if anything, a trifle too full. The chin was too prominent, the lips very mobile and of a brilliant red; but for this colouring the face was strangely pale. The nostrils were finely marked and sensitive, the eyes were dark, fine, earnest, vivid eyes. The head was small and well shaped, and round it coiled a great deal of lustrous black hair. She wore an exquisitely fitting dress of silk and velvet, and round her slender blue-veined wrists was a profusion of old lace. The white collar, which showed the outlines of her fair throat, was fastened by a brooch of dead gold; altogether she was good to look at. When I was seated, she began looking down at the rings shining on her fingers.

"May I ask if you have filled the place of steward before?"

I replied of course in the negative.

"No," she said musingly, and cast a glance at

the man who remained by the fire smoking. He was a tall man of about forty, with a winning smile, and light blue eyes, and the smallest hands I ever remember to have seen for a man, albeit they looked strong. He took the cigar from his lips, and said, and very frank and pleasant was his voice—

"I don't think that any matter, my dear child. I could soon point out to Mr. Lechlie just what it is you would have to trouble him with." Then turning to me—"If not impertinent, may I ask if you have done anything before, been in a bank, or anything of that kind?"

I replied that I had not, and frankly owned that I had chiefly maintained myself by the writing of short stories, and that I was tired of it, and wanted a complete change of life. Again looks passed between my two examiners.

"Stories of the Wilkie Collins type?" inquired Miss Churchill.

"Oh, no," I replied with a laugh; "I have no talent for such complications."

"I don't see that need be any objection," said Miss Churchill graciously; "but," she added frankly, and fixing me with those wonderful eyes of hers, "you will not mind my being frank, but you are perhaps just a little too young to undertake so responsible a trust?"

I could not help blushing as I replied I was not so dreadfully young, and stated what my age really was. She seemed a little surprised to hear I was as much as twenty-three, and concluded by engaging me.

"I must tell you that in this I represent my uncle, who is quite old now and infirm, so he leaves all such things to my care and his friend here, Mr. Clifford. I had an interview with some one only yesterday, who had come down from London by a late Sunday train. We were not entirely pleased, and we told him to come for our decision at two o'clock this afternoon. I think we should have engaged him, Mr. Lechlie, if you had not come."

"Then I have had a very narrow chance of missing what I came so far to secure," I said, "for I all but lost my train, should have lost it, but for what I think a very good habit—that of strapping up my portmanteau over-night, and putting into a bag in the morning such things as I have wanted to keep out."

"Why, what a very good idea," said Miss Churchill.

"Is it your invariable practise?" said Mr. Clifford with a smile.

"I don't think I have swerved from it once, sir."

"Dear me, what a thing it is to be methodical. You'll have to take me in hand, Mr. Lechlie."

"I don't suppose," said Miss Churchill, "you will see Mr. Churchill for some little time, because the steward whose place you are about to fill had been in our family for years, and we were all greatly attached to him. So, of course, it must be rather a pain to him to see a new face. He was a splendid man of business, was Jones. He had only one fault, Mr. Lechlie. He occasionally drank too much, and coming home one dark night from the village tavern, where he had been, he must have missed his footing and fallen into the lake in the grounds, for there he was found next morning."

"Poor old Jones!" said Mr. Clifford from his

place on the hearth-rug; "he was devoted to your uncle if ever a man was."

"Yes," said Miss Churchill, trying, I could see, to repress a sigh; "I think he was."

After a little more talk, it was arranged that I should enter upon my duties the following Wednesday. The deceased steward's house was undergoing extensive repairs, so for the time I was to occupy apartments in Grove House itself.

Miss Churchill rang the bell, and the same servant who had shown me in, showed me out, and the door closed behind me on the daintily furnished room and the presence of the woman which possessed it.

I walked back quickly to Kingstown, spent some time in writing to Grace, and then ordered lunch. The house seemed to be very full, and as I had engaged a private room, mine host did me the honour to bring the meal with his own hands.

"Are the Churchills well known about here?"

"They are, sir, very well known, and very much respected. May I make bold to ask, sir, if you are to be the new steward?"

"Yes! It seems like it."

"They've been hard to please though," resumed the proprietor of the Black Horse; "there have been a number of gents down from London in the last week; they all came to stop here just as you have done; but, bless you, sir, they all went back, and much to my surprise, for they were business-like, what you might call sharp-looking men—middle-aged men mostly. Some of them had been in noblemen's families, and could have given the highest references, but no, there was some objection to them all. It was most amusing to hear how they went on to me when they came back. The only one whom Miss Churchill seemed to like at all, till you came, was the young person who was in the smoking-room last night when you went in."

I remembered very well the man whom I had seen reading the *Times* so intently; and as I set to work on my cold roast beef, I smilingly wondered why the reverend seniors, who had served in noblemen's families, were set aside in favour of striplings like ourselves. I ate my lunch well, drank liberally of ale, and yet, though I would not own it, I see now that the sense of something ill weighed upon me. Lunch over, I lit my pipe and hurried off, for the first time since my arrival, to her, to whom but her, the sea! It seems to me that I love the sea as patriots love their country. As I turned a corner sharply, that grey, bleak January afternoon, I heard the shock and boom of her comfortless wintry waves. Yes, there she was, with, under that aspect, no beauty that man should desire her, but awful and immense, not actually stormful just then, but with dreadful capability. The great murderous will was all there. Let but the wind speak the word, and she would do to death with savage glee all the fleets of all the world!

I trudged along the sands, listening to the tidal thunder of her waves, thinking chiefly of the little house at Hampstead, and my darling coming and going there. Mrs. Rivers was "at home" every Tuesday afternoon from four till seven; it was then getting on for five. The little drawing-room, which always smelt of violets, would be looking bright and warm, and my sweetheart would be pouring out and handing round tea, and no one

would guess how wholly her thoughts were elsewhere. "Good God bless you, my dear!" I said instinctively, as I turned my steps, and walked back to Kingstown.

After dinner, I sat some time in the smoking-room, listening to the clinking of glasses and the sounds of song and laughter, which proceeded from the apartment dedicated to commercial travellers. It seemed to me I would rather be a commercial traveller than a steward; his life would be so much freer. I could not help calling myself a discontented beast. I had got what I had been longing for—a change of life, with what seemed to me a splendid salary. I could awake in the morning without having to rack my brain for plots, and yet here I was already wishing for something else! I knocked the ashes from my pipe, and went to bed, but alas! I could not sleep for thinking of Miss Churchill's eyes. I wondered why she had not asked me for a reference; then my thoughts wandered, and rested on Grace, and I fell asleep.

I was up in good time the next morning, and after an early breakfast had myself and effects driven to Grove House. It was bitterly cold, with a hard, pale blue sky—that cold which calls for no energy of wind to bring it home—cold, sharp as an Arabian scimitar, of which the slightest touch will do its work efficiently.

Arrived at Grove House, I was shown at once to my apartment—as warm and comfortable a room as man need desire to occupy. As I regarded it, I began to feel less gloomy, for I own I had been feeling gloomy.

I was shortly after joined by Mr. Clifford, who evidently saw I was a gentleman, and, instead of looking down upon me, respected me for the step I had taken, and treated me almost with cordiality. He had an unusually frank and winning manner.

"You'll find it quiet after London," he said with one of his bright smiles; "but you must try and be as cheerful as possible. I hope you smoke? You do; that's all right. You will like to read in the evenings. Just think of what book you would prefer, and the chances are ten to one that we have it."

I thanked him most sincerely for his kindness, and then he explained to me exactly what my duties would be. They seemed simple enough, the most important being that of dispensing money and controlling the expenditure. That, after all, only needed a good head for figures, which happily I possessed. All the books were put into my hands, and I at once got to work. Then I went to inspect some works which were going on up the estate, and made my report; and in the dinner-hour—of course then I dined early—I found time to finish my letter to Grace, begun the night before. In the afternoon, while I was pointing out to the head-gardener some changes Mr. Churchill wished making, Miss Churchill came up, and accosted me very pleasantly; the cold air had brought a faint rose colour into her cheeks.

"Mr. Churchill wishes to see you," she began. "I feared he would think it too painful, but he says he wishes to become accustomed to you—not that you will see much of him, as he never goes out of doors in the winter, and keeps quite to his own wing of the house. Oh! and one word, Mr.

Lechlie—you are not, of course, likely to do such a thing—but on no account mention Mr. Clifford's name. I don't mind telling you that my poor uncle's brain is painfully weak just now, and he has come to that sad state in which people without the least cause turn upon their dearest and best friends. He has very strange moods."

I replied that I would bear in mind all that she had told me. As we passed through the hall, in which firelight and twilight were just then joined in amicable agreement, I spoke of the organ which stood therein.

"Do you like music?" she asked, pausing. I replied there was nothing I liked more. She said nothing, but going to the organ began to play. I know not what it was she played. I only know it was wild and weird, as if the spirit of a forlorn, autumnal twilight sea, moved by a mild melancholy wind, could be rendered into music. Then all at once she burst into singing, and, to my great surprise, seeing how low her voice was in speech, in a tone of high-pitched sweetness, which contrasted with, but only made the music more effective. Then she desisted; closed the lid, and said, "Come." I followed her through the twilight up quite a different staircase to any I had traversed before. After many windings we came to a door on which Miss Churchill rapped, when a gruff voice responded—

"Yes, come in. Oh, it's you, is it, Lucy?" said he to whom the gruff voice belonged, as that lady stepped over the threshold.

"Yes, dear; I've brought the new steward, as you said you wished to see him."

"Lechlie. Oh, yes, let the man come in, let's get it over, and have done with it," I heard him mutter.

"Come in, please," said Miss Churchill, and I entered. I saw before me, sitting in a big arm-chair, with an evidently very gouty foot stretched out upon a cushion, a man who could not have been more than fifty years of age. He was very stout, and had an anxious, bloated, perplexed kind of look.

"So you are Lechlie, the new steward," he began, looking at me with hard grey eyes.

I replied that I was none other.

"Well, I hope you may prove worthy of your predecessor. A man with whom I would have trusted every shilling of my money."

Then he leaned back, and seemed for awhile to forget me, and his hard eyes softened a little as he said almost to himself—

"We shall not look upon his like again! Poor old Jones! faithful as a bull-dog!"

"Dear," said his niece, laying one small hand upon his arm, "have you anything more to say to Mr. Lechlie?"

"Lechlie? Oh yes," he said with a start. "I have been dreaming for a moment, I do get so sleepy these cold days. Man has no fair chance with an east wind." Then addressing himself to me—"You look young, Lechlie, to undertake the responsibilities of a steward."

"Young, sir," I assented with a laugh, "but I hope I need not add, honest."

"Honest," he said somewhat tetchily; "no one is questioning your honesty. Without that being assured, you would not be where you are now. I leave the making of such appointments now in my niece's hands. I have faith in the intuitions of

women, and she gave me a very favourable report of you. Still I repeat, you look young."

I smiled, and said that I would try to prove myself worthy of older years. Then he gave me some directions about things in general, and I withdrew.

The interview had of course been gall and worm-wood to me, but, thank heaven, it was over. A great wave of desolation swept over me, which was just a little spent after I had commenced another letter to Grace, to be posted next day. In the evening, my duties being got through, I took a walk in the keen bitter air. The stars were out, and the shine of them seemed to make it still colder. How profoundly and dreadfully still it all was! As I returned I could not help overhearing some words from two people who were walking in front of me. Their tones were low, but in the great stillness of the frosty night their words were audible.

"I think we have done well, but you always were so hard to satisfy."

"My dear child, I don't say I'm not satisfied; but one can't be too careful, you know. I think it will be all right."

I lagged behind for a minute or two, and then went forward at a brisk pace, and recognized and passed Miss Churchill and Mr. Clifford. Was it morbid of me to fancy that the words I had overheard referred to myself? Why should they not refer to a new horse, or the new cook who had arrived only a day or two ago. And if they did refer to me, why not? They would naturally talk me over. Still, in spite of all my reasoning, the words had in them, for my ears, something sinister—sinister as words heard in a dream—and they kept recurring to me: "One can't be too careful, you know."

I went in, and sat long by my bright fire pondering the words, and when I went to bed and fell asleep, I dreamed of them: "One can't be too careful, you know!"

(To be continued.)

SCENTS.

IV.

JONQUILS.

DEAR little church: decked in thine Easter dress,
In all thy faith, though winds are all a-blow
About the pine-trees, where keen April snow
Rouses the rook to almost dire distress
To see the winter back: I would confess
To thine own silence that I worship so,
That I would have thee only softly know,
The peace I feel in thee is made the less
When thy four walls are echoing with praise,
Or made by man all resonant with words,
That break in on my dream of silent awe,
For I would sit and rest, as one who strays
In pine-woods sacred to God's happy birds,
And feeling God is near me! ask no more!

V.

WHITE PINKS.

AGAIN I wander down the garden walk,
Between the roses in the summer heat,
Lying in shimmering lines about my feet,
And watch her gather—turning oft to talk—

The fair white pinks each on its pale grey stalk.
Then tie them up in bunches on the seat
Beside me, as I drink their perfume sweet,
The old-world scent: that new ones may not lack
From being sweetish.

Then once more the scent
Hangs round the chamber where her coffin lies
Waiting the bearers, who will come, with tread
And creak of boot, to carry her God lent
So short a while, out underneath His skies
To share the silence of the silent dead.

J. E. PANTON.

MEDICAL REMINISCENCES.

BY GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

THE LOCUM TENENS. ION'S ROMANCE.

A YOUNG medical man, who wants to see a bit of life in the British Isles, and meet with a few mild adventures, might do worse than become a *locum tenens* for a time, before settling down to practice on his own account.

I would not advise any one to go on being a *locum tenens*, for the simple reason that a rolling stone gathers no moss; a medical man ought to gather moss in the days of his youth; in after life he will find it a very comforting and cosy commodity.

Loca tenentes (that, I believe, is the proper plural) are as a rule strange animals. One would imagine from the advertisements of the Medical Association gents in London that they kept these *loca tenentes* in casks, for if a practitioner needs one he can have him at any moment by writing or by telegraphing. As soon as the message is received, the medical agent simply lets one loose and packs him off by next train, and some hours afterwards he comes swinging into his employer's study or surgery, as free-and-easily as if he had been born in it.

"Well," he says, in an off-hand kind of way, "when do you want to be off, sir? Start when you like. As soon as I wash my hands and have something inside me, I'm ready to go on duty."

"Glad to hear it," the doctor answers. "I'll be off then to-morrow morning. I'll just put you up to the ropes first. I keep my instruments in this drawer, look, and——"

"Oh, bother!" exclaims the *locum*, "leave me alone to find everything out. Any bad cases?"

"One or two. There is old Mrs. Growler ill with rheumatism."

"A paying patient?"

"Yes, a first-rate patient. Then Squire Nimrod has the gout again. Look well after him."

"Rather," says the *locum* with a wink. "A squire is a squire, ain't he?"

"Yes. Well, the parson has another attack of quinsy, and Mrs. P.'s baby is down with the measles——"

"I say doctor," says the *locum*, seating himself in an easy chair in an easy attitude, hands deep in pockets and legs stretched straight out in front of him. "I say, doctor, just stick all that down on the slate will you? I haven't a memory worth a button."

The doctor smiles and writes.

The *locum* lights a cigar.

"You smoke of course," he remarks off-handedly.

"Sometimes," replies his employer.

After the *locum* has washed his hands and had something inside him, and, perhaps, a game of romps with the doctor's children, he goes away whistling into the surgery and begins rummaging among the bottles, looking into cupboards, and opening drawers.

He is putting himself up to the ropes.

But next morning this strange animal is at work right enough. He is right though rough. He seldom dresses professionally, a black frock coat, and a flag-staff hat, are not much in his line. He prefers the wide-awake, sometimes even mounts a Tam o' Shanter, his clothes and his collars are generally somewhat loud, his coat probably rough dark Astracan with a crimson or blue silk handkerchief peeping coyly out of the breast pocket.

The strange animal is often brusque in manner, goes straight to the point in his questions, has no more sympathy with pain or sickness than is actually necessary, sometimes he hasn't so much. He hums an opera air and swings his gold watch-chain while thinking about a case at the patient's bedside. Or he beats a tattoo on the table and whistles while he listens to the plaint of an invalid. When he has to make a bit of an operation like slicing a whitelowed finger open, he takes out his instruments with a *sang froid*, that is pleasant to behold, chooses a bistoury, seizes the unfortunate sufferer's hand as if it were an old shoe and goes to business in a thoroughly business-like manner.

"That's the style," he says as he slits the quivering flesh. Then perhaps he looks towards the face of his victim, and sees that lips and all are white.

"Feel a trifle faint, eh,?" he remarks. "Soon go off. Drop of brandy 'll put you as right as a trivet."

You observe that the *locum* does not hesitate to make use of slang.

Well there is this to be said in favour of this class of *locum tenens*, there is no humbug about him. Dr. —, who has employed him, is well aware that he knows his business; he has the utmost confidence in Messrs. Julip & Quilt, the medical agents; they would not send him a bad man on any account.

After all I rather opine that most doctors would prefer an animal such as I have described, to an eager, nervous, extra-zealous young man, got up in the extreme of professional fashion, the pink of medical etiquette, and brimful of ethics and physiology.

Besides a man may carry a very good heart under a rough coat, and probably a clever enough brain under a wide-awake.

There is a deal in faith. It really does work wonders, and the faith that the poorer classes of patients in—say a country district—often have in the new doctor is astonishing.

For this reason alone the importation of a *locum tenens* is sometimes of advantage to a district.

"Oh, sirs!" I've heard one old wife say to another, "this new doctor is a clever, clever man. My son John is up and about again, and he hasn't been attending him over a week."

"And my wee Jimmie," the other replied, "has got the roses back to his cheeks already. If he'd been in the old doctor's hands he wouldn't have been out of bed yet."

If the *locum's* employer be a poor-law doctor, the advent of the former will generally elicit a rush of parish cases to the dispensary for physic. Poor people, I know from experience, are remarkably fond of medicine. And they like it strong and bitter. A gallon or two of quassia-infusion is sometimes kept handy to stem a rush; it is easily made, is a fairly good tonic, and it is cheap. Carbonate of ammonia is another handy drug for dispensary use, and so I need hardly say are Glander and Epsom salts, infusion of aloes, senna and iron mixtures.

But to give a pauper patient a beautiful, clear, sweet-perfumed mixture would be a waste of good material, because he or she would have no faith in it. And without faith the physic would be swallowed in vain.

Your *locum tenens* is generally a pretty good whip and knows, or should know, how to ride. This latter, however, is a part of my own education which has been somewhat neglected. I remember going to do *locum* once, when a very young man, for a country practitioner.

"Of course you can ride," he said.

It was not a question, it was a positive assertion on the worthy doctor's part.

When Paddy was asked if he could play the violin. "I daresay I can," said Pat, "but, bedad, I never tried."

Of course I could ride! I was too shy to confess that I would much prefer to get inside and pull the blinds down.

"Sally will carry you like a linnet," he continued; "she hasn't been out of the stable for three days."

The doctor went off next morning, and that same forenoon I was sent to go on post haste to see a patient ten miles away.

The boy brought Sally to the door. It was not blowing then, mark me, but it was raining a bit, so I put on a light india-rubber mackintosh. I was going to button it after I got on board. Mark that.

"Sally's as fresh as paint," said the boy encouragingly.

My heart sank to zero. I would have been pleased to have heard him say she was a bit lame and wouldn't take me more than four miles an hour.

Sally blew her nose and champed her bit, and tapped the ground with her fore foot. Then she turned her head and looked me straight in the face.

"Why don't ye mount?" she seemed to say.

The truth is, I was considering whether I shouldn't send for a ladder, for Sally was nearly seventeen hands high.

However, I balanced myself on the edge of the water-butt, and the boy brought her alongside.

"Tother foot first, sir," he cried. "My eye!" he added, "you'd be getting on with yer face to the tail, sir."

Sally pulled away from the water-butt too soon, and I was left hanging across her on my chest for a time, as limp as a wet handkerchief. But I got erect at last.

"Are ye all ready, sir?" said the boy.

I breathed a prayer, and then said—

"Yes, my boy, let go—cast loose."

He did. And off we went. The village was a mile long—all one street—and away we tore at a hunter's gallop. It was not blowing when I started; it was blowing now, a strong head wind too. I had not buttoned my mackintosh; I couldn't now; it flew straight out behind me like the mantle of poesy that the angel is throwing over Burns in the picture.

On we tore—scattering pigs, scattering the school-children—scattering cocks and hens.

The old women lifted hands and eyes of amazement heavenwards.

"Somebody must be awfully ill. It must be a case of life and death."

On we flew. Sometimes my left leg seemed to be the longest; sometimes my right. I wonder why that was. Sometimes I seemed to have as many legs as an octopus; can any equestrian explain that? I grasped the pommel with one hand. Why wasn't there a ring or something in it to give a fellow a better hold?

As to the motion, it was not unpleasant, strange to say. Only I was the shuttlecock—*Sally* was the shuttle. And for ten miles and over we kept up the game. Then *Sally* drew quietly up at a public-house, and I was precious glad to get down and rest.

I have met with many a curious specimen of the genus *locum*, but still some of the country practitioners they engage to serve, are not a whit less peculiar.

I have also observed that people in rural districts rather like a medical man who has some marked peculiarity of conduct about him. Here are one or two examples.

Dr. A——, let us call him, used to ride a strangely marked piebald horse. If this animal happened to be lame Dr. A—— used to borrow a bay, but over and over again he has been told—

"I hate to see you riding up to my door, doctor, with that bay; it brings no luck. If you can't come on the piebald, I'd rather you'd stop away."

But in course of time Dr. A——'s piebald went over to the majority of piebalds, and he had to use the bay. Will it be believed that his practice began rapidly to fall off, and there were those in the parish who proposed inviting a new medical man to the place? This would doubtless have been done, but lo! Dr. A—— appeared one morning mounted on a new piebald.

Confidence was at once restored, and to this day I believe Dr. A—— is riding round his parish on a piebald nag.

Dr. B——'s peculiarity was extreme good nature; so good-natured was he, indeed, that he was kept poor when he might have been well-to-do.

When Dr. B—— entered a house of a forenoon, he was welcomed as a friend by the family, and after he had seen his patient, his host and he would retire to the parlour, and there, over a glass of wine, a conversation would be started and carried on until the good medico was called to visit somebody else. And if any one sent him a gift of any kind, the doctor was too shy to put his bill in. A sack of potatoes, a bushel of oats, a brace of pheasants, or a hare was often all the fee he received. And the blacksmith would shoe

his horse for nothing; the shoemaker would make him a pair of boots, and the painter would paint and paper a room for him when perhaps it didn't require any such decorations. But Dr. B—— was well beloved, and always contented, easy, and happy.

Dr. C—— held power in his parish, because he was one of a long line of doctors of the same name, who had practised in the village. And I do believe that had anyone else attempted to set up in the place, he would have been left to starve. Dr. C—— was an old man and very old fashioned. There wasn't a child in the village who wouldn't run the soles off their shoes to do him a favour, for they all loved him and looked upon him as a kind of universal grand-daddy. One of the pockets of his coat always contained oats; the other sweets for his children as he called them all. The oats were not for his horse but for himself. He was always eating oats and the more puzzling the case he had to attend, the more oats did he nibble during the time he was thinking about it. That was Dr. C——'s peculiarity—oats.

Dr. D—— was an exceedingly clever doctor, so everyone said. He did not look so. He never needed a *locum tenens*. He could not have afforded one, besides he never took a holiday, never wanted to go away anywhere. He could not afford a horse, let alone a *locum*. But wet day or dry day, in storm or sunshine, winter and summer, at early morning, or late at night, Dr. D—— was plod—plod—plodding through his parish. And I do not believe anyone ever met him without a few green rushes in his hand, and one in his mouth. When he entered a room to see a patient, he put his hat and gloves on a chair, and carefully deposited the rushes in the former, then proceeded to business. His peculiarity was rushes. But he had another, namely, laudanum. If the case presented any degree of difficulty, Dr. D—— would beg for a glass of water, then out would come the phial with its dark brown contents, and the doctor would dose himself before making any attempt to prescribe for his patient.

But Dr. E—— had a less innocent peculiarity than Dr. D——'s. I am sorry even to name it, but it is a most exceptional case. Dr. E—— drove a roaring practice in one of the most flourishing towns in the far North of Scotland, but after a certain hour of the day, he was not what any one could call sober. But really there were many who preferred the man in his cups. He was much thought of, and I was told that in the event of his having any unusually critical case in hand, he used to become a good templar for a time, that he might retain all his faculties unclouded. This was very obliging of the man, and his patients undoubtedly benefited by it.

Nature, it seems to me, has one web from which she cuts the material for the *beau ideal locum tenens*, just as she has another, from which your *beau ideal* bagman, or commercial is made from. Well there is no mistake about one thing, Dr. Jonathan Scrobie, a *locum* I had the pleasure of knowing in Yorkshire was cut out of the right stuff.

Tall he was, off-hand and handsome withal, age about eight and twenty, could ride and drive, and perform a difficult operation as coolly as he walked into church of a Sunday morning. He was

very regular in his attendance at church, but as his true and honest biographer, I am bound to say that it was because there was a very beautiful blonde in the pie. I have hardly ever seen a more sweetly pretty girl, from which confession you will naturally infer that I also used to look at her. Well I did, but I knew the lass, and her father, Squire O—— as well, and was on visiting terms at the house—and a fine old-fashioned family mansion it was.

I am not going to spin a long yarn, however. Ion, as I familiarly called him, looked more at Ella in church, I fear, than he did at the parson, but never, I must do him the justice to say in a rude way. Still when he was sitting with his hand in an apparently pious position over his face, others might have been deluded into the belief that he was meditating on the words that fell from the lips of good old Mr. N——. I knew better. I knew Ion was peeping coily through his fingers, and that his eyes were directed to the squire's horse-box.

"Dang me," he said one day to me, "if I ain't over head and ears in love with that girl. Can't you give me an introduction?"

"I'll try what can be done," I replied, "but mind all t'ould squire's cash goes to his daughter, and it isn't likely he will bestow her hand upon——"

"Upon a *locum tenens*, eh?"

"That's it," I said.

"But hang it all," he replied, "if this young lady were to fall in love with the *locum*, don't you know, and her happiness in life and all that sort of thing depended on her marrying him, don't you think that t'ould squire would give us a fatherly blessing and—leave us the brass?"

"I really couldn't say," I said. "Perhaps he would."

"Well," he continued, "I'm not a fellow to boast, but many a girl has fallen in love with Ion, you know."

"I can easily believe that," I replied, and Ion lit a huge cigar and departed into dreamland apparently, with his legs on the mantel-piece and his eyes in the clouds he blew.

When he had smoked one cigar, he threw the end away and lit another.

"You get me the introduco," he said, "and I'll do the rest."

"I'll try," I answered again.

But accident, not I, favoured Ion.

I was sketching one day on the top of a hill. Down beneath me was a bend of the road. That morsel of road was presently converted into a stage, on which right before my eyes the first act of a drama was performed.

The stage, so to speak, was already occupied by a great hulking tramp, who was lying on the flowery bank, gazing skywards.

Enter from the right a young girl with her eyes bent upon a book she was engrossed in. Coming up behind her, but many yards away, was a gentleman on horseback, the reins loose on the horse's neck. He was going only at a walking pace, but sitting in that easy way, that I have so often admired, but never could imitate. That was Ion. He seemed part and parcel of the chestnut he bestrode.

Up springs the tramp.

In a moment the girl's watch and chain have

changed ownership, and she herself is born backwards against the bank.

There is a loud, ringing scream. I dashed away my sketching materials and prepared to rush down to the rescue.

But stay. Ion is before me. The chestnut is flying.

Next moment Ion has dismounted, and the way he mauls the head of that unhappy tramp was a fine thing to witness.

In two minutes more the girl's watch and chain are restored to her. The tramp is doubled up like an empty sack at the side of the road, and Ion has given Ella his arm and is carrying her home.

The chestnut had trotted away to his stable. He was a doctor's horse and knew his way about.

Now here were the elements of a very pretty love story and romance, all cut and dry. She would fall in love with Ion as Ion had fallen in love with her. I felt sure of that. Why, the pair seemed cut out for each other, and if marriages are made in heaven, a marriage in this case was already arranged for.

And so on and so forth.

Ion was in high glee that night. The squire was profuse in his thanks, and made Ion stay and dine with him, and henceforward Ion was to be no stranger at t'ould squire's house. There was to be a knife and a fork for him whenever he cared to come.

Well Ion was not shy. No *locum* is. He did not fail therefore to avail himself of t'ould squire's kindly invitation, and many and many a bottle of fine old port was opened and discussed over the walnuts and the wine.

Ion shy? I should think not. Finding Ella all alone in the garden one bright June day, Ion confessed his love and asked her to become his wife.

I saw Ion that same evening.

He was smoking furiously, and his hair hadn't been brushed. There was a wild, reckless kind of a glare in his eyes too, which told me something more than usual was in the wind.

"Just like my blessed luck," he cried.

"What's up, Ion?" I inquired.

"Up?" roared Ion. "Why, t'ould squire's daughter is engaged to a baronet bloke down south somewhere. Shouldn't I like to punch his blessed head for him!"

So that was an end to Ion's romance.

ABOUT BANK-NOTES.

BY C. H. WALL.

WHEN a Cabinet Minister finds it possible to delight and amuse an audience by speaking to them on so vague and unromantic a subject as "Nothing," it can hardly create surprise to find that even the simple and familiar bank-note has a history not altogether devoid of romance. There are, indeed, few subjects that cannot boast of being surrounded by a halo, if not of romance, at least of curious and interesting incidents. And we shall find that bank-notes, although at first sight confined to a purely matter-of-fact and uneventful existence, do at times leave this well-beaten path,

and enter upon new courses where other and strange experiences await them.

The present bank-note was the outcome of an agitation among business and philanthropic men who were anxious that some remedy should be found to prevent the frequent forgeries that occurred, and the hangings by which they were punished. So rude and simple was the bank-note circulated at the beginning of this century that it was possible with comparatively little skill or expense to forge them, consequently the execution of bank forgers grew to be an almost every day occurrence. It is a strange fact that bank-notes existed for more than sixty years before any attempt was made to manufacture them illegally, and the unenviable notoriety of being the pioneer in this nefarious business belongs to Richard Vaughan, a linen draper of Stafford. Being anxious to impress his betrothed with an idea of his wealth, he displayed before her a number of notes which afterwards proved spurious. He might have continued to amass wealth unsuspected, but for the treachery of an accomplice who divulged the whole secret to the Government. His perverted and ill-advised ingenuity brought Vaughan to a tragic end in 1758, but his pernicious example soon found imitators. So frequent, indeed, were the executions arising from bank-note forgeries that the sympathy and indignation of the public were aroused in favour of the criminals. It appeared to them inconsistent with justice, tempered as it should be with mercy, to sacrifice human lives in punishment of such a comparatively trifling crime. The public opinion became at last so strong and pressing that the Government was compelled to appoint Commissioners to inquire into the cause of the continual forgeries, and to devise if possible some means by which they might be prevented. Previous to this the Bank directors had made many efforts to remedy the evil, but without avail, as all the plans submitted to them had on examination proved worthless. At one time they had almost decided to adopt a very complicated and costly machine, contrived with such nice skill as to print the note on both sides simultaneously, and yet to appear as if it were but one impression. A workman, however, came forward and showed that the same result could be obtained from two plates working on a hinge. One hundred and eighty different plans were submitted, by the Bank directors, to the commissioners for examination. All these contrivances, more or less clumsy and costly, had been recommended for adoption as calculated to meet the demands and secure the object of the commissioners. In addition to the mechanical devices, some seventy varieties of paper, made at the Bank Paper Mill by way of experiment, were sent in. The outcome of this lengthened investigation was the bank-note as it now exists. The colour of the paper is peculiarly white, and cannot be imitated except at very great expense, whilst its combined thinness and strength are alike remarkable and unique. The paper is made in sheets large enough for two notes, which before they are sized are capable of doubled of suspending a weight of thirty-six pounds, although a note of itself weighs but eighteen grains. The texture of the paper is also peculiar; it is so crisp and uniform that experienced clerks are

feeling them. A further difficulty in the way of forgers is the water, or rather wire-mark, which is practically inimitable owing to the costliness of the frame required and the difficulty in managing it properly even when made. The edges of the notes are thin, rough and uncut, and every precaution which ingenuity could devise is taken to render their imitation well nigh impossible. A special kind of ink, the colour of which is remarkably black, and almost free from the brown or blue tint observable in other black inks, is used in printing the notes. The largest bank-notes in circulation are for £1,000 each, but it is said that two notes for £100,000 and two for £50,000 were once engraved and issued. The toughness and durability of the notes have been proved in many ways. In the Bank of England may be seen a collection of notes which have passed through fire and water, and can still be identified. Two twenty-five pound notes, recovered from the Chicago fire, were sent in for payment. Although burnt to a crisp black ash, the paper was scarcely broken, whilst the engraving is as visible and clear almost as on a new note. There are also five five-pound notes recovered, after six months' immersion, from the *Eurydice*; they are still perfect, although bearing a slight brown tinge, the effect of the sea water. There is but one ordeal they cannot pass through, and that is the scrubbing, bleaching and mangling of the laundry. This ordeal, to which they are sometimes exposed by the negligence of ladies who will leave them in their dress pockets, defaces them seriously, although their identification is still possible.

Some years ago an announcement was made which filled the directors of the Bank with alarm and consternation, as it, if true, seemed to render useless all the elaborate precautions that had been taken, and to expose them to forgery of a novel and undreamt-of kind. A scientific gentleman declared he had discovered a means of splitting bank-notes. Such a discovery not unnaturally took the directors aback, as it seemed as if they had now to face a system of fraud that would defy detection. They had confidently relied on the crispness and peculiar nature of the paper for immunity, but now this safeguard was overthrown. A correspondence ensued between the Bank and the discoverer of the strange mode of duplicating a bank-note, and it was finally arranged that a trial should be made in order to test the truth of the assertions. The inventor wished to be paid for his secret, and the Bank on their side wished to know whether the secret was worth paying for. A marked bank-note was accordingly submitted to the inventor, who returned it in halves a day or two later. The directors eagerly scrutinized the two pieces, and their alarms were soon dispelled. The note was certainly split in two, but only one portion could have been circulated, as the impression on the other half was too faint to impose on any person. Still, the discovery was curious, and might lead to fraud, so another ink has since been used, which would leave the back half of a split note perfectly blank. The splitting of a note is done in a very simple way, indeed the very simplicity of the process would appear to have misled those who sought to discover how the feat was performed. In the exhibition of 1851 there were several specimens of split paper exhibited,

and the discovery has been turned to advantage in several ways, as for instance in the removal of letterpress printing from the backs of engravings.

Bank-notes have been made to serve strange purposes. They have been used to light cigars, to serve as curl papers, to wrap up snuff, and have even been eaten as a sandwich between pieces of bread and butter by sailors, who have returned home laden with prize money and intoxicated with rum. A case is known in which a bank-note had been pasted over a hole in a window to keep out the wind and the rain, the owner being quite ignorant of the value of the piece of paper.

A strange and touching story is connected with a note which lately became the property of a collector of curiosities in Paris. This note was paid to a Liverpool firm in the ordinary way of business, and the cashier, wishing to test its genuineness, held it up against the light. He then perceived some faint red marks running across the note, and these marks he was eventually able to decipher. They were the words:—"If this note should fall into the hands of John Dean, of Long Hill, near Carlisle, he will learn thereby that his brother is languishing a prisoner in Algiers."

Mr. Dean was communicated with, and he at once took measures to procure the release of his long-lost brother, who had been given up for dead long before. With the assistance of the British Government, and by the payment of a heavy ransom, the captive was rescued from the clutches of the Dey, only, however, to succumb to the havoc made on his constitution by the privations and exposure he had endured. The words on the note had been written by him with a splinter dipped in his own blood.

Tales without number have been told of the strange manner in which notes have disappeared, and of the odd places in which they have ultimately been found. A dispute once arose at a nobleman's house with respect to a certain verse in the Bible, and, as one of the disputants denied the existence of the verse altogether, a Bible was called for. The book was fetched, and in it was a marker which, on examination, proved to be a bank post-bill for £40,000. Whether it had been placed there as a reproof to show how little the book was consulted, or whether it was merely mislaid, we cannot say.

Bank-notes are often returned with strange endorsements, and there are many of these preserved at the Bank as curiosities. On a five-pound note were found the following words:—"Good-bye, thou tantalizing child of the Threadneedle dame! Thou payest the first debt I have honestly paid for a year—a debt for a few poor luxuries furnished to miserable me in prison. Go tell to the world that, though hand join in hand, the transgressor shall not go unpunished."

On another is the still more candid confession of ruined prospects and squandered fortune:—"Did the world ever know a man to be blessed in the inheritance of a princely fortune, I wonder? This ten-pound note is the last of thousands of the same denomination left me by a father who had slaved all his life to win the store. Go, miserable remnant, and with this parting I begin the world anew. God give me strength to help myself!"

On the back of another were found the following lines:—

Your presence makes me jump for joy,
But joy soon turns to sorrow,
And, ten to one methinks, but I
Shall change my note to-morrow.

In the year 1814, large frauds were perpetrated on the Stock Exchange, and the brave and gallant Lord Cochrane was charged with being implicated in these bold, barefaced swindles. He strongly protested his innocence, but his assertions were not credited, and he was sentenced to pay a heavy fine, to be imprisoned for a year, to be deprived of all his titles, and to stand for an hour in the pillory on the Royal Exchange. The latter portion of this sentence aroused the indignation of the public, with whom Lord Cochrane had become extremely popular, owing to his daring exploits. The pillory he was spared, but the rest of the punishment he was forced to undergo, though he never for one moment ceased to declare his innocence. He managed one night to escape from his cell, jumping from the prison wall and falling a distance of twenty-five feet. In spite of the severe injuries he sustained, he managed to drag himself to the House of Commons, where he once more denied having participated in the crimes of which he was accused. But it was to no purpose. He was carried back to prison, where he was detained until the expiration of his term, when he was released, although not until he had paid his fine of one thousand pounds. On the back of the note with which he paid the fine he wrote the following protest:—

"My health having suffered by long and close confinement, and my oppressors being resolved to deprive me of property or life, I submit to robbery to protect myself from murder, in the hope that I shall live to bring the delinquents to justice.

"COCHRANE."

Years after his innocence was established beyond all doubt, and his honours and titles were all restored to him—a scanty reparation for all the wrongs and injustice he had suffered.

"WILLIE IS DEAD."

THEY tell me Willie is dead—
Willie the rosy boy,
Who used to shake his sunny head
And laugh in his childish joy.

They say that he died last night—
I saw him yesternorn,
Like a rosy beam of light,
Half hid in the golden corn;
And the butterflies flitted over his head:
And now they tell me Willie is dead.

Drowned in the deep pool, there by the mill,
Drowned in the dark pool, under the hill:
Nobody saw him; nobody knew,
When the sun died, that Willie died too;
Nobody knew, when the harvest moon shed
Its light on the meadow, that Willie was dead.

Somebody found him lying there,
And his cheek was pale, but not less fair,
And the water dripped from his golden hair
As they carried him back to his little bed,
And solemnly whispered that Willie was dead—

Willie the joy of the whole hill-side,
Willie the darling! Willie the pride!
"Where is Willie?" the mother said;
But none dare answer that Willie was dead.
J. C. WINScombe.

THE VICAR'S MISTAKE.

BY ANNETTE CALTHROP.

IT was a chilly afternoon, and Miss Olivia Courtland had drawn her chair close to a blazing fire, as she sat alone—her feet on the fender, a cup of tea in her hand, and a novel in her lap—in the large drawing-room of Melburton House. The room was huge, dim and shabby, with a distinguished shabbiness, which was in keeping with the age and respectability of the family, who for years had been its owners. The carpet had faded to a sombre neutral tint; the yellow brocade curtains—once exceedingly handsome—were distinctly the worse for wear; there was a disfiguring crack in one of the long mirrors, between the windows. But imperfections were only partially discernible now in the fading light; the glow of the fire fell, here and there, with charming effect on pieces of delicate china, on a glorious blue bowl filled with feathery white chrysanthemums, on photographs and books, and statues, and scraps of antique needlework.

The house itself—a weather-beaten, moss-grown, red brick structure—stood in an indifferently kept garden, with large lawns, and scanty flower-beds, and elms and chestnuts, and beeches and Scotch firs. Beyond, was a small park, stretching down to the high road, which passed through Melburton, the smallest and quietest of Worcestershire hamlets, with a grey old church, an ivy-covered vicarage, and a few scattered, thatched, white-washed cottages.

Olivia was, as we have said, alone. Her sister-in-law, Lady Melburton, had driven off with a young guest an hour ago, to cancel long-standing debts of morning calls; Lord Melburton was smoking his afternoon cigar or cigars, in an apartment, which by custom or courtesy was called the "study."

The afternoon seemed very long and dull to Olivia; she sighed as she poured out for herself a second cup of tea. Then, her restlessness suggesting a change of attitude, she rose, leaned her hand on the mantelpiece, and thrust out a dainty little foot to the blazing coals.

By common consent, Miss Courtland was voted one of the beauties of the county. Her figure was tall and elegant; her head was finely shaped, and surmounted by a coronet of thick brown hair; her features were regular, her mouth was firmly set, and her large eyes were of a beautiful blue grey. She had a fine manner; no one could administer a rebuke with more dignity, or more lasting effect; but she could, when she chose, be agreeable enough, after a condescending splendid

fashion essentially her own. Olivia wore mourning for her father, who had been dead only some four or five months. The late Lord Melburton had been a popular man in his own county, and beyond its limits. But he had had his faults, and they were faults, with long-lived consequences. His mode of life and his amusements—he had a turn for horse-racing and gambling—had been expensive, beyond his means. His estates, being entailed, descended to his son, who, happily for himself, had married a rich lady, the daughter of a Manchester mill owner, whose purse, if not her inclination, was equal to the call made upon it, by her husband's assumption of his new honours. But Olivia found herself almost penniless at her father's death. Conventionalities attaching to her station forbade her taking any steps to earn a living for herself; she lived on in her brother's house in a state of dependence, peculiarly galling to her imperious nature. For her sister-in-law, the mistress of the house, she entertained an inveterate and a proudly silent dislike, which that lady as inveterately, but less silently, returned. The old lord's wife had died when his daughter was a child; for years Olivia had been the presiding genius of her father's house.

Circumstances had indeed changed.

No wonder that Olivia sighed as she stood over the fire, reviewing her past happy life, and looking apprehensively forward to the future. It was inevitable, that in surveying her prospects, some recognition of the possibility of an advantageous marriage should enter her mind. Connected with that recognition came a swift thought of a Sir Harry Wilmott, whose home—Freston Towers—lay within a few miles of Melburton. A year ago Sir Harry's attentions to Miss Courtland had been the talk of the neighbourhood; prophecies of a matrimonial termination to those attentions were everywhere current. But the prophets had spoken without their book. Twelve months or more had elapsed since the young man went off on a lengthened continental tour without making his expected declaration; he was still abroad. Olivia meanwhile preserved an apparently light-hearted composure, which some of her friends attributed to pride, and some to real indifference. When news of Lord Melburton's death, and of his daughter's straitened means, reached Sir Harry during his travels, that gentleman contented himself with sending Miss Courtland a brief letter of formal condolence.

"I am too poor for him; he expects to make a brilliant match," mused Olivia, on this afternoon when we first make her acquaintance; and the thought was tinged with a bitterness which might, had he known of its existence, have proved flattering to her swain's already sufficiently strong belief in his powers of attraction.

"Mr. Henderson," suddenly announced Waller the butler, throwing wide open the drawing-room door. There advanced towards Miss Courtland a middle-aged gentleman, faultlessly dressed in clerical black.

The Reverend Gilbert Henderson was vicar of Melburton. He was a small, spare, delicate man, with soft greyish hair, bald on the temples; with mild blue eyes, a pale, refined face, and a gentle, courteous manner. He was Fellow of Caius, Cambridge, had been in residence for a considerable number of years, and had held the Collage

living of Melburton for only three or four years. The quiet of his old haunts—the cloisters, the college garden, and the Fellows' Lodgings—was reflected in his mode of address. He cared little for society, and led a stay-at-home, studious life. Meanwhile certain duties of his profession were discharged with unusual ability; his sermons won for him the admiring regard of the appreciative among his hearers; they were scholarly, original, full of thought, and tersely and carefully written; but the monotony of their delivery was somewhat prejudicial to their effect.

"Mr. Henderson! I am very glad to see you," said Olivia, in her most gracious manner, as she rose and held out her hand. Truth to tell, the entrance of a visitor was a welcome event in the midst of her solitude and weariness. The cordial ring of her voice brought a faint flush of pleasure to the listener's pale face.

"Thank you," he said simply, as he held her hand in his, and looked down into her beautiful eyes.

"You find me all alone," the hostess went on, as she poured out a cup of tea for her visitor, duly remembering his taste in the matter of cream and sugar. "Fanny and her sister Mattie—Mattie Bompas is staying here by-the-by—have gone to the Hillyards of Enderby."

"Yes, Waller said that you were alone. I was very glad of the fact," said the vicar, suddenly raising his eyes.

Olivia made a bow of thanks for the implied compliment; she leaned back in her chair, and toyed with a feather fan in her lap.

Mr. Henderson rose; a look of resolution had come into his eyes.

"I have something to say to you, Miss Courtland," he began, a little abruptly.

Olivia looked up inquiringly, struck by something unusual in his tone.

There was a slight pause. Then the vicar cleared his throat, and began. He nervously clasped and unclasped his small white hands, but his manner was calm, and his voice low and clear.

"I shall probably surprise you," he said gently, "and I may seem to you presumptuous. But what I have to say must be said at once; I cannot any longer bear the strain of suspense. Miss Courtland, Olivia"—he drew a step nearer; a great earnestness had come into his face, into his voice—"I admire and love you more than any words of mine could ever tell. I cannot offer you a wealthy home, or so distinguished a position in the county as you have a right to expect; but if you consent to become my wife"—there was a tremor in the speaker's voice as he pronounced the last word—"I can at least promise you the devotion of my life."

Olivia looked up, in unaffected astonishment. Never before had she so nearly lost the stateliness of her composure. She esteemed and liked the vicar as a friend, but he had never—never once—figured before her mental vision, in the light of a possible husband. No answer to his declaration occurred to her now.

But Mr. Henderson did not expect an immediate answer. He had anticipated that Miss Courtland would require time for consideration; he would wait her own time he said.

"It is very good of you," began Olivia at length, "to—to—care so much for me. I am taken by

surprise; I had no suspicion of all this. You must let me send my answer, please," she added, lifting her grey eyes.

"Take your own time," Henderson said again. The enforced quiet of his manner could not hide his real emotion, his real suffering under suspense. He loved Olivia with all the strength which was in him; life, without her, seemed to him a very dreary prospect indeed.

"There is just one personal matter which I ought to mention," he went on presently; "it may have some weight with you in your decision. The fact is that my life is not what doctors call a very good one. A physician, whom I consulted when I was in London, some little time ago, tells me that the condition of my heart necessitates a certain amount of care. There is no disease, only weakness, and he assures me that with ordinary care I may, and probably shall, live to be an old man. It is right, however, that you should know that such weakness does exist."

The tender solicitude in the speaker's voice plainly revealed the fact that whatever possibilities were involved in the state of his health, were matter of anxiety to him, on Olivia's account, rather than his own.

"In the event of my death," he added, "there are some savings from my fellowship and living, and a small amount of personal property, which—but—"—pulling himself up—"I mustn't trouble you with money details. All my circumstances will, of course, be placed before your brother, if you give me leave to refer myself to him."

Soon after this speech the vicar took his leave. He gave one long backward glance, which took in all the details of the familiar, shabby, refined room, with the gleam of the firelight on the tea-cups and the flowers, and on the graceful, black robed figure, with the bent head and folded hands. Then the door closed behind him, and he was gone.

Olivia still sat in her old position, gazing down into the fire. A new turn had been given to the current of her thoughts. Mr. Henderson had loved her all these years, and she had been ignorant of the fact. The knowledge of her poverty and of the distastefulness of her present surroundings had, no doubt, emboldened him at last, to come forward and urge his suit. Olivia had been brought up in a worldly school, and no veil of sentimentality disguised from her the social advantages and disadvantages of the position offered for her occupation. Clearly, the match was not a brilliant one. Gilbert Henderson came of a good old county family; his personal character was unexceptional, and his intellectual capacity high. The living which he held, was worth a thousand a year. There, the list of his qualifications, as suitor for the Honourable Miss Courtland's hand, began and ended. Whereas, Sir Harry—Olivia angrily curbed the thoughts which were hurrying off in a forbidden direction. She told herself that, at least Mr. Henderson's choice of time for a declaration, seemed the more flattering from its contrast to the ungenerously timed cessation of Sir Harry's addresses. The one suitor was as disinterested as the other was mercenary.

The question of her own fitness for the position of a clergyman's wife, troubled Miss Courtland not at all. She had long been accustomed to play the part of Lady Patroness of the parish; it

seemed to her that change of scene need cause little modification in the mode of enactment.

What should be her answer to the vicar's offer? At present she could arrive at no decision. She had not forgotten—she had been too much touched to forget—what he had said concerning the uncertainty of his life. But life was uncertain at the best. There was, as Olivia reminded herself, no disease in the vicar's case. And, if there was weakness, necessitating care, well—care must never be remitted—that was all.

The sound of wheels was heard; a carriage drove up to the door. Lady Melburton, a small, brisk, dark-haired, bright-eyed, little lady, enveloped in furs, entered the room, followed by her sister Mattie—otherwise Matilda—Bompas, who was on a visit to the hall.

Mattie was a vivacious little maiden, with a high colour and merry black eyes; in many quarters she was very popular, but Olivia relentlessly pronounced her “bad style;” her voice was a tone too loud, her manner a shade too pronounced, to please that lady's fastidious taste.

Olivia rose, to make room for the new comers, beside the fire. For civility's sake she lingered for a few minutes to hear and answer what they might have to say, before she sought the shelter of her own room. But there had not been time for the exchange of many words when Lord Melburton—a tall, florid man, with sandy hair and red whiskers—burst into the drawing-room.

“I say, Olivia,” he began at once, and it was evident enough from his tone that something had occurred to anger him; “I wish that you would mind your own business. Dobson has just been up to the house”—Dobson was the Melburton steward—“and he tells me that there's no end of a row about the vacant almshouse. Laming's widow goes about declaring that you promised the house to her.”

Olivia was used to her brother's temper; to all outward appearance she was entirely unruffled by its exhibition now. Superbly indifferent she looked as she stood by his side, her head erect, the feather fan hanging carelessly from her hands.

“Certainly, I did mention the house to Sarah Laming,” she said coldly. “Father always promised it to her.”

“I intended to give it to Savory's widow.”

“Savory hadn't been on the estate nearly so long as Laming. And father promised—”

“I intend to give it to Savory's widow, I say. And I'll thank you, Olivia, not to meddle in my affairs. There's no end of a row in the place, and all through your interference.”

“There goes the dressing-bell,” cried Lady Melburton, hailing the clamorous sound, as a signal to suspend discussion.

She agreed with her husband concerning Olivia's love of interference, but she was unwilling to witness a quarrel between brother and sister on the subject.

Olivia, had not, however, the smallest intention of quarrelling. She sailed out of the room in contemptuous silence. But she was more incensed by her brother's rudeness than she would have cared to confess.

Mr. Henderson's offer had been felicitously timed. It came on a day when Miss Courtland's musings over Sir Harry's conduct had left her mind unusually sore. And now her position in her brother's house seemed unsupportable.

“I won't stay here to be insulted,” she said angrily to herself.

That night she wrote to the Reverend Gilbert Henderson a letter, in which she accepted the offer of his hand in marriage.

Before summer was at its height, Olivia had been three months established as mistress of the old house, smothered in ivy and virginia creeper, known as Melburton Vicarage.

The home was greatly changed by her advent. Redistribution of furniture and addition of artistic trifles had given a new character to the dull old drawing-room; the dining-room had undergone a metamorphosis, and even the study bore traces of a new mistress's presence in the deftly arranged flowers, which day by day found a place upon the writing table. The most luxurious of garden chairs made their appearance on the lawn; obscuring branches of trees had been lopped off, to give an unimpeded view from the house of the delightful old-fashioned borders, wherein fuchsias and cabbage roses, carnations, and asters, and peonies, hollyhocks, sunflowers, and lavender bushes grew together in picturesque disorder and profusion.

The greatest change of all was in the master of the house. A new alacrity had come into his movements, a new look of gladness into his face.

The vicar was very happy. His commonest tasks were set to music, now—the music of his love. A song of reverent thankfulness was always in his heart. Dear and close association had confirmed him in the doctrine that there was for him but one woman in the whole world; that woman was now his wife.

Some members of the Melburton congregation even affirmed that the vicar's style of preaching had undergone a change. There was some foundation for the statement. Mr. Henderson's sermons had always been above the average level of such compositions, but it did happen to him more frequently, now, than it had happened of old, that in writing his sermons, some eloquently apt illustration of his thought—some poetical expression—would occur to his mind. The music within him was seeking utterance. And just that touch of eloquence, just that poetical phrase, would fix itself on the attention, and linger in the memory of his hearers.

The vicar—always more or less occupied in literary pursuits—plunged, for the first time, into fiction. He had devised a plot for a novel, and had proceeded some way in its delineation. The theme was a love story of rustic life; there was no great ingenuity of construction, but there was a certain idyllic grace in the writer's method of dealing with his subject. Olivia, to whom each chapter of the manuscript was read, as it was finished, gave it as her opinion, that the success of the work was already beyond question. When the author laughingly told her that her overestimate proved her a deficient critic, she professed a superiority over the purely critical reader; she quoted with her accurate, distinguished French accent, the wise statement:—“*Le plaisir de la critique nous ôte celui d'être vivement touchés de très belles choses*,” and she stontly maintained that her husband's novel was one of the “*très belles choses*,” in question.

One July evening, Mr. Henderson, who had walked over, after dinner, to the neighbouring village of Freston, to discuss some business matter

with the rector, Mr. Pembridge, was returning home on foot. He was just in the mood of pensive reverie to feel the beauty of the sweet summer evening. When he had mounted a hill, just outside Melburton, he paused a moment to gaze down on the green fields, sleeping in golden light, on the spires of distant hamlets, on the scattered homesteads, peeping out here and there among the trees. "How peaceful it all is!" he said to himself under his breath. Then he hastened on; the return home, and the narration of his experiences to his wife, was always, to his thinking the best part of all his solitary expeditions. "I mustn't forget to tell Olivia the news," he thought. He had picked up at Freston a piece of intelligence of greater interest than the ordinary run of local gossip. Sir Harry Wilmott, the Freston squire, had suddenly and unexpectedly returned from the Continent to the 'lowers.

At last the vicar reached a side gate to the vicarage garden. He lifted the latch and passed along a narrow grass walk, leading, between shrubs, to the lawn before the house. The sound of voices fell upon his ear. Looking up he saw his wife, seated on one of the garden chairs upon the lawn; beside her—one hand resting on the back of her chair, the other switching, with a cane, a little tuft of uneven grass—was a visitor, a gentleman. Henderson recognized the visitor at a glance. "My news has been forestalled; here is Sir Harry come to announce himself," he thought. And he hastened on with a smile to greet Olivia and her guest.

The new-comer was a tall, well-built young fellow, with closely cropped dark hair, a dark clear skin, and a pair of lazy black eyes. There was, about him, an air of indefinable distinction and of easy assurance.

Just now, however, the usual languid calm of his manner was considerably disturbed. The restless movement of the hand, which struck at the grass, betrayed his agitation. All at once the vicar stopped dead, arrested by some words of Sir Harry's and by their mode of utterance.

"I heard in Lugano of your engagement to Henderson, and I was in despair," the young man was saying. "I had thought that you understood—that you would have waited my return—that you knew—"

The vicar heard no more. The smile had faded from his face; a white dazed look had taken its place. Assuring himself that he had not been seen, he turned, retraced his steps, made his way by another path to the back of the house, and entered his study by an open window.

"I thought that you understood me—that you would have waited my return—that you knew—" These words were ringing in his ears.

Their meaning had come to him with a flash. In a moment he remembered gossip—to which he had paid little heed at the time of its occurrence—which had in old days connected Olivia's name with that of Sir Harry. It seemed to him now that a substratum of truth must have underlain the gossip. There was no mistaking the young man's manner on the present occasion, or the nature of the memories to which he had appealed. No doubt there had been, between himself and Olivia, certain passages which he considered tantamount to a declaration of love; he had gone away, believing that a secret understanding had

been established; Olivia, however, had failed to understand, and, in the meanwhile, persuaded thereto by the distastefulness of her home surroundings, and her dependent position, and by her real regard for the vicar, had consented to become Henderson's wife.

Some loose manuscript sheets of the new novel lay on the study table. Henderson took them absently into his hand; he sat very still thinking.

No idea of attaching blame to Olivia for assuming the duties of a wife, when her heart was not her own to give, occurred to the vicar. Circumstances had, he held, been hard for her. If any one were to blame it was himself, he had been too importunate; he ought to have realized that marriage with a prosy middle-aged suitor—devoid of wealth or distinguished social status—was not a fate, likely to ensure Olivia's happiness. Selfishness had blinded him—so Henderson reasoned. But then he had loved Olivia so truly!

The evening wore on. The old garden with its lawns, and shrubs, and flowers, was flooded with golden light. But, for the vicar, all the beauty of the day had vanished.

At last his eyes fell on the manuscript in his hand; he laid down the sheets with a sad smile. A quiet conviction came to him that he should never finish the story which he had begun with so much enthusiasm. The thought troubled him but little. One absorbing sorrow banished all minor troubles—the sorrow evoked by his supreme pity for his wife. That Olivia's pride, as well as her sense of duty, would ensure entire outward faithfulness to her marriage responsibilities he would have scorned to doubt. His trust in her was perfect. But he told himself that he could better have borne any sorrow which was exclusively his own, than he could bear the haunting sense of Olivia's unavailing regret over a happy fate which might have been hers, but of which he had deprived her. There was no way—or only one way, which might not prove practicable—of escape from her present position.

The sun sank lower; the room was growing dark. Still the vicar sat motionless before his writing-table.

At last a quick step was heard. "You here, Gilbert!" said Olivia, putting her head in at the door. "I didn't know that you were back from Freston. Won't you come into the drawing-room? Jackson has brought in the coffee."

As the vicar obeyed the summons, his wife went on: "I have had a visitor this evening. Guess who it was."

"Sir Harry Wilmott."

"You have heard of his return, then?"

"Yes, dear; Pembridge told me."

As they entered the lighted drawing-room, Henderson turned his eyes quickly to his wife. Her face wore its ordinary expression, as her voice had its ordinary tone. Women possess a wonderful power of hiding emotion, he thought.

How brave Olivia was! Her husband's pity for her was but the deeper for the exhibition of her courage. For her sake he did his best to assume his wonted cheerfulness; as he took his coffee from her hand—placing it, untasted, on a table beside him—he talked on and on of such news, local and general, as occurred to his remembrance. But it was a relief to him when Olivia moved off

to the piano and sat down to play. Now, at last, he need make no attempt to talk. He sat silent, in a low chair, his head bent, his thin white hands clasped upon his knee.

Olivia had chosen a sonata of Beethoven's. She played well, with good expression and execution. Henderson cast many a stealthy look at her as she sat in the lamplight, her fair proud head thrown back, her eyes half closed, the eyelashes drooping over her cheek; his own eyes were full of a mute tender longing to speak to her some word of comfort, of sympathy, of appreciation.

The vicar did not heed—did not know—what music it was which filled the air. And yet, whenever in after days the opening notes of the sonata which Olivia played that evening fell upon his ear, a strange, vague—to him unaccountable—feeling stirred in his heart like pain.

Half-past ten struck; Olivia rose and closed the piano.

"Will you ring for prayers, Gilbert?" she said. And, to arrest her husband's wandering attention—he seemed to her to be in an absent mood—she laid her hand with a caressing gesture upon his shoulder. He put his arm about her. "God bless you, Olivia," he said, earnestly. Then, moved by a sudden impulse, he drew her face down to his and laid his lips upon her forehead. "My poor child," he murmured, in his tender voice.

Sir Harry's return was an event of no small significance in the neighbourhood. In preparation for the campaign of welcome, Lady Melburton at once gave an extensive order to her dressmaker; her sister, Mattie Bompas, who was again visiting at the Hall, followed her example with even more costly and magnificent result. Solemn dinner parties were organized, tennis parties were events of frequent occurrence. The Hall took the lead with a numerously attended garden party; surrounding country houses followed suit.

Olivia, accompanied by her husband, on occasions when no excuse of parochial engagement was forthcoming for his absence, attended all the gatherings. Her animation in society, the ease of her intercourse with Sir Harry, suffered no perceptible diminution. Certainly she showed no sign of pining under a sense of a spoiled life; with praiseworthy composure she accepted the inevitable. After a while Mrs. Henderson suggested to her husband the desirability of giving a dinner party on her own account. The vicar acquiesced at once, as he would have acquiesced in any suggestion which she chose to make. The party proved a great success. Cook, hostess, and guests alike acquitted themselves with credit. It was true that the host took his part in the solemnities only with an obvious effort, but then he had never been an aspirant after social distinction; the quiet gentleness of his manner at least bespoke perfect breeding, and his occasional lapses into silence were matter of small importance. Through intervening flowers he often glanced down the table towards his wife, seated at the head of the table with the guest of the evening, Sir Harry Wilmott, in the place of honour by her side.

Sir Harry appeared to be in excellent spirits. His conversation was sprinkled with just the due admixture of well related personal reminiscences; to carry the record of his travels and experiences

to the verge of boredom for his hearers was an impossibility to a man of his taste and discernment.

"Even apart from his wealth and good looks, and high position, Wilmott does possess many attractive qualities," the vicar thought sadly to himself. "Whereas I—" Overcome by the irony of the contrast presented to his mind, he gave vent to a short laugh, which caused Mattie Bompas, who was sitting near him, to open her handsome black eyes in surprise.

Time went on. Summer passed into early autumn. Sir Harry was a frequent guest at the vicarage. He was often at the Hall, too. Olivia met him there only on stated occasions; there was no great intimacy between her brother's house and the vicarage.

The vicar went about his usual work in his usual manner. His parochial visits were duly paid; quite a little stack of sermons appeared on his study table. But his novel was laid aside. He pronounced himself an unwarranted intruder in the realm of Fiction; the regions of Romance and Poetry were, he asserted, not for him; he would do well to confine himself within the frontier of the severest prose.

One Sunday evening, after Henderson had been preaching with more than his usual vigour, he returned home from church jaded and out of sorts. He turned from his untasted supper, and went off early to bed. There was no cause for anxiety, he said, in answer to his wife's affectionate inquiries; he was only a little tired; a night's rest would set all right. But before morning it became evident that something more serious than mere fatigue was the matter. A doctor, hastily summoned, declared the vicar was suffering from a malady with which he had previously been threatened—an attack of the heart. Olivia remembered that before his marriage her husband had told her of the medical opinion that his life was "not a very good one." He remembered, too. The verdict gave him little pain now. All was happening for the best he thought.

Many long days of serious illness followed each other, during which Olivia nursed her husband with unremitting devotion. But the first sharpness of the attack passed; convalescence began; the doctor cheerfully prophesied ultimate recovery.

As days went on, however, the patient did not make progress sufficient to verify the professional prophecy. His lassitude was great; active exertion seemed no longer to possess any attraction for him; he was content to lie, silent and unoccupied, on the sofa in the dressing-room, to which he had been moved. But he always insisted, "now that he was so much better"—these words he pronounced with a sad little smile, as of some secret knowledge—that Olivia should avail herself of whatever opportunities of amusement the social proclivities of the neighbourhood afforded. In accordance with his wishes, she attended one or two tennis meetings—the expiring effort of the autumn season. On her return he was always interested in the account which she would give him of the events in which she had played a part.

One October afternoon Olivia had gone off to a tennis party at the hall. Her husband was stretched on his accustomed sofa by the open window of the dressing-room. He gazed out over the bared har-

vest fields, the meadows, the hedges, with their profusion of red berries, the oak trees turning brown, the elms with their falling foliage, the beeches a blaze of red and gold. Flying clouds, suggestive of storm, swept across the sky. The scene was very beautiful, with a wild, grand beauty of its own, in contrast with 'the loveliness of summer sunshine.

The vicar told himself quite simply, without an impulse of sentimentalism, that this autumn, with its glorious effects of changing colours, was the last autumn that he should ever see.

The thought was free from morbidness, though it was not free from a certain touch of sorrow. But serene satisfaction rose superior to the sorrow. Awhile ago Henderson had assured himself that there was, for his wife, but one way of escape from an inexorable fate which bound her. The one way had opened out; for her sake, surely, he could be content.

The afternoon closed in; dimness fell over the landscape; dark clouds gathered in the sky. Through the obscurity the vicar presently saw two figures approach along the road leading to the vicarage; they stopped some few minutes before the gate. The figures were familiar ones. They were those of Olivia and young Wilmott.

In a short time Olivia entered the study. Very graceful and charming she looked, in a dress of soft grey, a knot of red chrysanthemums at her breast.

"Are you tired, dear?" the vicar asked, as she seated herself on a stool at his feet and put aside her hat; he laid his hand—a very thin, wasted hand—upon her hair.

"Just a little. Are *you* tired, Gilbert?—that's more to the purpose."

"No, my child."

"Has Dr. Lowe been here since I left?"

"Not yet; he promised to come some time this evening."

There was silence.

"Since I have been lying here alone I have been thinking," the vicar said presently, and he spoke in his most cheerful tone, "of something which I ought to have said to you before, Olivia, and which I should like to say now."

"What is it, dear?"

"Only this. I should like you to know, and—and—to remember always, that I have been very grateful to you for your goodness, not only through this illness of mine, but through all the days since we were married. I seldom speak—it is not easy for me to speak—of my love and admiration for you. But, indeed, I have been very sensible"—still the thin hand lovingly stroked Olivia's hair—"of your goodness to me."

With a sudden pang Olivia realized the fact that her husband spoke of his married life as of a period already passed. She turned on him a glance of anxious inquiry.

"And have you not been goodness itself to me, Gilbert?" she whispered in an unsteady voice. "What should I do without you?"

"Oh, you will do very well, my child. No; don't mistake me. I know—I am very sure—that if—if—I were to leave you, you would be very sorry at first. But in time happiness would come to you—as it is only natural that it should come—and as you well deserve."

Tears were not far from Olivia's eyes. The vicar, glancing at her, changed his theme.

"Have you nothing to tell me of the party at the Hall?" he asked with a bright smile.

Olivia hesitated. She had come home primed with a startling piece of local intelligence, but her husband's words had banished it from her mind. With a great effort, she collected her wits, and said, assuming a gay tone of voice—

"I heard some news this afternoon. Some one—a neighbour of ours—is engaged to be married. Guess who the 'some one' is, Gilbert."

"Nay, I cannot guess. Tell me, dear."

"Sir Harry Wilmott."

"Sir Harry Wilmott engaged to be married!"

The vicar echoed the words in a tone of amazement; the blood mounted into his pale face.

"Yes; he's engaged to Mattie Bompas; he told me so himself this afternoon. The news was surprising to me at first, but now that I have time to think it over, the match seems to me a fairly appropriate one. I never—in the old decisive, imperious manner—admired Mattie much myself, but she is generally considered pretty; she is young enough to acquire a better manner in time and with pains, and her father is enormously wealthy. Sir Harry would never have chosen a poor wife, and in the present instance he really seems very much in love."

The vicar stared at his wife in hopeless surprise. "In love! I thought"—he broke off—"I mean that—that—I had an idea"—he stammered—"that Sir Harry would not marry, or at least not now, when——"

Olivia looked up.

"He is a noted flirt," she said, "but I suppose that he always meant to settle down sometime into a sober member of society." Then, struck by an odd look in her husband's face, she went on with a heightened colour—"You probably know that at one time Sir Harry did me the honour—with an ironical smile—of paying his court to me. But he was always too cautious to carry his suit too far. As I said, he never would have married a poor wife."

"I thought—that is, I——"

Whatever might be the nature of the vicar's thoughts, their expression did not come easily to him this afternoon. His evident embarrassment impelled Olivia into unusual communicativeness.

She rose, and stood by her husband's side, one hand resting on the back of his sofa.

"On the evening of Sir Harry's return to Freston," she said, "he had the assurance—(she slowly pulled to pieces a chrysanthemum which she had taken from her dress, and she never raised her eyes from the flower)—to come to me with the pretence that your offer of marriage had only—(with a wise, incredulous little laugh)—forestalled one which he had intended to make me. I think that he wished—in spite of the fact that I had married in the meantime—to resume the old flirtation just where he had dropped it. You see—Freston is dull, and (ironically)—it was natural that he should want amusement. But, to do him justice, he apologized very humbly when he discovered that his impertinence really annoyed me. We shook hands, and since that time we have been quite good friends."

The vicar did not at once reply. He drew his wife within the circle of his arm; his breath came very fast.

"I—I knew something of all this," he said falteringly. "But I thought—I was afraid——"

Life had begun to wear a new aspect for him; the suddenness of the change seemed more than he could bear.

"Tell me," he whispered, "do you care more for me than you cared for Wilmott in the old days?"

"Can you ask?" burst forth Olivia vehemently, a shade of reproach in her voice. "Have I lived with you all these months, when you have been so loyal, so unselfish, so tender to my many faults, and not learned my lesson? It is true enough—it is only too true—that when we first married I did not prize you at your full worth. I know you now; and"—with a toss of the shapely head, and a shrewd look in the grey eyes—"I know Sir Harry. Have you not found out"—Olivia's hand stole into her husband's—"that I love you with all my heart?"

"What miracle have you wrought upon my patient?" asked Dr. Lowe, turning to Olivia with a bow and a smile, in the course of his interview that evening with the vicar. "Until to-day his progress has not wholly satisfied me. But now he seems on the high road to recovery."

The high road was safely traversed. Before many weeks had passed, the vicar had regained his usual health. He looked younger and brighter—so his friends unanimously declared—than he had looked before his illness. With energy and relish he resumed his old tasks. Even the discarded novel was taken up again; in due time it was published, and it justified, by its undoubted success, the eulogiums passed upon it by a fair critic.

Henderson never again doubted his wife's pride in him and attachment to him. But he was loth to allow that her affection could entirely equal that which he himself entertained. Sometimes he would laughingly quote to her lines from *Twelfth Night* concerning a namesake of her own—

"Make no compare
Between that love a woman can bear me,
And that I owe Olivia."

Sir Harry was married before the year was out. The wedding took place from the Hall. Mr. Henderson was the officiating clergyman. The ceremony over, he offered his congratulations to the newly-married pair.

"If your marriage only proves—as I hope it may prove—half as successful as my own," he said, turning to the bridegroom, "you will be, I promise you, one of the happiest of men."

VANQUISHED.

(From the Spanish of EUSEBIO BLASCO.)

DESPOTIC, stern, and proud was he:
"Never will I bend the knee
To God, or king, or destiny!

"To man should man with trembling bow,
And kiss the hand and stoop the brow?
Let base slaves thus—not I, I vow!"

I saw him next on bended knee;
He gazed in her sweet eyes, then he:
"Oh, ever thus, love, hold thou me!"

W. SPEARMAN.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholme."

PART III.—continued.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER V.

A BROKEN BRIDGE.

BESIDES this reason, she had another. She was very fond of Jack as a companion and friend; she talked to him of things which she never mentioned to other people; but she had a natural shyness or reserve which made personal familiarity obnoxious to her. It was inherited, perhaps, in a new and exaggerated form, from her mother. She did not want to give any one the right to make love to her; she shrank from caresses; she had a prejudice against kisses.

Miss Leake, in spite of her affection, had not overwhelmed her with fondness, and since the days when she was a little child, and had sat on her father's knee, she had received caresses from none but women. Even her Indian uncle did not presume on his relationship, but treated her with courtly politeness, as a charming young lady to whose society he was fortunate enough to have some claim. And in her dreams of union with her father she had no vision of personal endearments; she understood him to be abstracted, reserved, somewhat indifferent; for had he not abandoned the sweet fondness of her mother? She was prepared to enter into his views, to aid his purposes, to administer to his comfort, and altogether to promote his happiness by her presence; but she had no expectation of being petted or caressed, and no desire to be so treated. It would take some strong emotion to break down the barrier of personal reserve which custom and nature had woven about the young and tender frankness hidden underneath.

The name of "young Mr. Langford" was by no means unknown to Henry Dilworth even while he was in Australia. Miss Leake had confided to Kate's father, with due cautiousness, her wishes on Kate's behalf. She told how the young people were constantly together, how happy Kate seemed to be in Mr. Langford's society, and how likely it was that the friendship would end in a marriage, as Mr. Langford had long desired. Then she praised Jack, assured her brother-in-law that he was a young man whom he would certainly like and approve when he came to know him; she spoke also of his excellent prospects, of his *suitable* position. She also proceeded farther to observe that it was very desirable for girls to settle early in life; undecided prospects, uncertain position, having ruined many a girl's health and happiness; and then she did not speak of Agnes, but she knew that Henry Dilworth would think of her. While she dwelt on the advantages of a marriage with Jack Langford, and a consequent settlement among "friends that she knew, duties that she understood, places to which she was attached," she did not refrain

from reference to other triumphs of her niece, especially those achieved on a visit to the London uncle. A baronet had, she understood, paid to Kate "very great attention." She felt that this would convince her brother-in-law of two important things—firstly, that she herself had no mere worldly ambition, but desired only safety and happiness for her niece, since she could let the baronet go without regret; secondly, that Kate was not fitted to be hidden away in a corner of the world cooking steaks and darning stockings; that she was, on the contrary, brilliant and accomplished, formed to shine in the society which was her natural sphere, and where only she could move happily and easily.

Henry Dilworth understood it all. His mind, once so slow to perceive a hidden implication, an unspoken suggestion, had been sharpened by bitter experience and keen disappointment. He saw the whole position from Miss Leake's point of view, and he thought that perhaps she was right.

Nevertheless he could not bear to take her word for it, and so he resolved to go to England and see.

He did not send word that he was coming, his silence did not arise this time from haste, but from doubt and uncertainty. He landed in England in a condition of indecision which had been absolutely unknown to him in the earlier part of his life. In his youth prompt perception of the next thing to be done and cheerful readiness to do it had seemed essential attributes of his character. Now he set foot on his native shore with half a dozen contradictory plans struggling in his mind. He would write to Elmdale—he would not write; he would do some business in London and go back to Australia without seeing his daughter at all; he would send for her to join him; all these schemes he thought of in turn, and finally, without coming to any positive decision, but attracted by a desire beyond his control, he took the train for the north of England, with a portmanteau in his hand. The main part of his luggage he left in London, thinking he could return to it or send for it as events decided.

He was put down at the nearest station to Elmdale, and slowly walked towards his daughter's home. He could not even yet be certain that he wished to see her and so make an ineffaceable claim upon her. So far she was free of all actual knowledge of him, and of all demands on her affection. Would such demands be painful to her, disastrous to her comfort? If it were certainly so, he would gladly go back to Australia to die there a lonely man. But if, on the other hand, she was capable of loving him and of rejoicing in his love, what a treasure he would lose by his absence and silence! He thought of a quiet home—in some near county—where he could rest from active work and be happy in his daughter's society. There he could work up the discoveries he had made into useful form, and put his numerous notes into shape for publication. Possibly she might help him in that work, her letters being in his eyes beautiful models of composition. It all depended on her own feeling, on the way in which she revealed it in her greeting; for he was, on his side, certain to love her; even ugliness and bad temper would not have subdued his instincts of affection.

She could not have the same feeling for him and it might even be that the cruel idealism of youth would shut him out from her love and make her unhappy at his claim. He remembered her as a bright-eyed child, intelligent rather than pretty, and he could not, in spite of her letters to him, fill up the gap of years between that time and this, and realize what she must have become in the interval.

As he approached the place where the foot-path to the Stepping Stones left the high road, he heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and he was startled by a thrill of recognition when he caught a first glimpse of the two figures in the lane. He had seen some one who resembled them in other circumstances; they were like old acquaintances in a new life, and unconscious of the past in which he had known them. He was aware that a crisis in his life might be approaching, and that idea subdued him at once to an attitude of quiet waiting. He leaned against the gate and looked into the field to give himself more time for observation; and the pleasant sound of the young voices came to him with the murmur of the river; but he could not hear the words they uttered.

This brief picture of the two figures was one suggestive of happiness and harmony with surrounding circumstances. The lovely scenery in the foreground—wooded knolls, gray rocks, trees, and river—was completed by the glimpses in the background of noble mountains and purple distances. And the life to be led in such a spot might be one of mingled refinement and nobility. Nature had its grandeur of aspect in this valley without having given itself up to ruggedness and desolation. And humanity here was trained also to grace and beauty; it had been subdued to harmonious movements, but was not necessarily without higher powers and possibilities. The young equestrians were evidently prosperous examples of the productions native to this place; happiness was a natural thing to them, because they found themselves where all things fitted their capabilities and satisfied their desires. What was wanting in their life, and why should it be disturbed in its smoothness? What had he, a rude colonist, to do with them or their valley? He was a bit out of another life-puzzle which could only be fitted into this one by deranging its pieces and destroying its symmetry.

When Jack Langford rode away, leaving his companion alone, Henry Dilworth turned from the gate and went on towards her.

As it chanced, she spoke to him, she looked at him; and he could stand and look at her. He knew then, without any doubt, that she was his daughter, the child of his love and disappointment. He had every claim on her affection, every right over her life, and yet he stood there as a stranger to whom she condescended to be courteous. The actual power was his, but she was apparently mistress of the situation. Her first words seemed to decide his fate; it was impossible to reply to her kindly condescension by the humiliating disclosure of their relationship to one another. Her complete unconsciousness of any possible tie between them, as shown by the careless freedom of her address, put a strong barrier against the revelation of his identity. He felt himself what he seemed to be, a stranger, one who had let his claim on her love drift away to

destruction. The thought of going on to the Stepping Stones left him at once; if he could not claim his daughter now when they stood face to face alone, he could not permit her to find him awaiting her at home with a painful surprise.

So he took his way to the Red Cow, not yet trying to understand his position, or to decide how he was to work his way out of it. There were strangers, new-comers, at the little inn now; there he would not be recognized; he could wait and rest and think what course to take.

It was still open to him to go away as he had come, unknown and unsuspected. He had seen his daughter, had seen that she was full of beautiful health, and bright happiness; he had seen, too, the man whom Miss Leake had described as his possible son-in-law, and he might be satisfied that Kate's prosperity did not require his presence. He was very much saddened, however; for it seemed a hard thing to resign all claim upon this young creature while yet he was the nearest relation she had in the world. He had given up his wife, whether for her happiness or misery he had never clearly known; he had for a time yielded to Miss Leake's wishes, and resigned all demand on his child; but now that she was old enough to decide for herself, must he give her up once again, when he needed her most, and had confirmed his affection for her by actual sight? She would no longer be a vague image to him, her memory would haunt his loneliness; he would always know all that he lost in leaving her.

He established himself at the Red Cow, got out some papers intended for a geographical journal, which he had brought with him to put in order, and send off. He felt in his reluctance and indecision inclined at least to linger in this quiet spot for a few days, resting and letting his mind grow to a wise resolve. He was weary and worn out; disappointment tried him now more than fatigue, and the last twenty years of his life had made up in wear and tear of emotion for the peaceful progress of the twenty before them. His health was already broken, and he was well aware of it. The unusual power of his limbs remained to him for occasional use; but, if the muscles were right, the vital energy was gone; he was vaguely conscious of the fact that a prolonged life or a speedy death awaited him, according as he fashioned his manner of living in the immediate future. Life, with his daughter's affection to brighten it, might be a precious thing; but life spent cherishing itself alone would be impossible to him. If no happy home awaited him he must go back to die in harness.

He worked at his papers a little; but he was restless and abstracted; in the evening he left them for a lonely ramble on the hill side over the roads he had known long before. One or two peasants looked at him with wonder and half recognition, but he was altered sufficiently to escape being actually known. His hair was grey, he had grown a beard, and he stooped a little; the long swing of his powerful limbs was made with a slight appearance of effort. The last fifteen years had changed him from a man who had hardly reached middle age to one who was already old.

The sight of old scenes and the fresh air of the mountain revived him a little; fatigued in body, but somewhat more hopeful in spirit, he awaited the coming of a new day.

The new day when it came brought a slight adventure. A violent thunderstorm in the course of the night threw down a large tree on the bank of the river a little above the inn; and this tree destroyed in its fall a foot-bridge across the stream. It was connected with a path coming along the hill-side down to the valley, and its destruction cut off communication between the two sides of the river at this spot. In the course of the morning a boy belonging to the Red Cow reported that he had just seen from the high road a lady descending Elmrigg towards the foot-path.

"It looked like Miss Dilworth," he remarked, "and if it is, she's not heard of the break, and will have to go round by the upper bridge."

Henry Dilworth, hearing this, took up his hat and made his way to the broken bridge. He reached it a few minutes before Kate appeared on the other side of the water. She wore a pretty morning dress, and walked with that erect and graceful step which gave her an air of distinction that was independent of beauty.

She paused at the bridge with a look of surprise and perplexity, advanced cautiously for a foot or two on the broken timber to reconnoitre, and then became aware that her new acquaintance of the day before was drawing off his boots on the opposite bank. She stood still to watch, and he made no sign of perceiving her, or of acting on her account. He stepped into the water with his stocking feet and proceeded cautiously to wade across. The river came round a curve at this point, and rushed between its banks with some depth and violence, but its water was beautifully clear and every pebble at the bottom was seen, lying golden brown, or mossy green, or blue grey, under the sparkling surface. It seemed to Henry Dilworth a mere brooklet, for it came only above his knees, and he had been accustomed to swim strong and broad torrents. He was across directly; and, while Kate was still wondering what his purpose could be, he had begun to speak.

"There's been an accident here in the night; of course you didn't know of it. But I can easily take you across."

"Oh, no," said Kate, "I couldn't think of it; I hope you didn't come on purpose."

He smiled without answering. There was a strength of will in his smile and in his manner which conquered her as it had done her mother long before; she was unaware of that conscious authority with which he looked at her, but she yielded to it as if she had known what it meant.

"If you will put your hand on my shoulder and keep quiet, you shan't even wet your feet."

"But it isn't worth while."

"It is quite easy. That will do. It would have been a pity for you to go round."

He stepped into the stream as if he found her a very light burden to carry; but a strong emotion disturbed and weakened him at the moment. All his instincts of tenderness were roused by the situation, by the touch of her arm on his neck, the softness of her breath on his cheek. In the swiftest part of the stream he stood still. A strange giddiness and blindness, such as he had felt once or twice before, seized him there; but he gave no sign of it and, after waiting a moment to recover himself, he went on easily and put her down on the bank.

"Thank you very much," said Kate, fixing bright eyes of wonder upon him; "it was so very much to do just to save me a walk."

"It was nothing," he said, and he walked back with her to the Red Cow in silence. Then he said good morning to her and stood at the gate watching her walk quietly away.

She looked round, then came back, and seeing him still there said with a heightened colour—

"Hadn't you better go in and change your things? They are so very wet. You might take cold."

He looked down at his own feet as if roused to a consciousness of their condition.

"It is nothing," he answered, "I am used to it."

"But —"

"But I'll change them if you like."

He turned and went indoors accordingly, but when he reached his own room he appeared to forget what he had come for. He sat down on a chair by the table, put his head on his hand and plunged at once into abstracted thought. Henry Dilworth no longer remembered his daughter's suggestion nor his own intention of acting upon it.

(To be continued.)

AWFULLY CURIOUS.

IT seems likely that the use, or rather misuse, of the word "awful" commenced (as far as the present epoch is concerned) at a boys' school; it has somehow the smack of the eager, incontinent youngsters about it. From thence it must have migrated to an establishment for young ladies; for it is now chiefly amongst maidens of some twenty years or thereabouts that the word has become a factor in every species of conversation, and, indeed, married to the adjective "jolly," bids fair to supersede every other form of description of a laudatory character.

It is no longer a habit; it is an epidemic.

The heedless girls, if they only knew it, might, however, shield themselves behind the broad back of Socrates. For that philosopher had, it appears, fallen into the same trick. In the *Protagoras*, some of our readers will be surprised to hear, that Plato puts these words into his mouth:—

"Prodicus, the grammarian, corrects me when I use the word 'awful' (*δευος*) as a term of praise. If I say that any one is an awfully wise man, he asks me if I am not ashamed of calling a good thing awful? And then he explains that the word awful is always to be taken in a bad sense. No one, he says, ought to speak of being awfully healthy, or awfully wealthy, or of awful peace; but of awful war, awful poverty, awful disease: meaning, of course, by the term awful some evil that is full of awe."

This translation is taken almost word for word from Dr. Jowett's *Plato*. He renders *δευος*, indeed, dreadful, but awful is obviously quite as literal.

PAUL BENISON.

DREAMINGS : TO THE UNKNOWN LOVE.

Above all, the love of woman, next to the love of God, is the power of God to a young man's salvation; for all is of God, everything from first to last—nature, providence, and grace—it is all of our Father in heaven.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

It is feelings such as these, call them romantic if you will, which I know from personal experience can keep a man all his youth through, before a higher faith has been called into being, from every species of vicious and low indulgence in every shape and every form.

FREDERIC WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

○ THOU to whom these songs are writ,
These wand'ring songs of mine,
Although mine eyes have never lit
Upon thy form divine;
Yet, like the thought of mothers' love,
Thy love as strong and sure,
Doth lift my weary eyes above,
Doth keep me true and pure.

Thou art my love, and mine alone,
For thee I write and sing,
For thee I keep my heart—thy throne—
As yet an empty thing;
For thee I fight life's battle hard,
And struggle tow'rd the skies,
For thee I keep a valiant guard,
For thee my being cries.

Within my heart an Ideal Man
Is hid with Christ in God,
And when is clos'd life's little span,
Life's darksome path is trod;
I know its glorious form will rise,
In His Own Image, sweet,
My long-sought Ideal—in His eyes,
A perfect man, complete!

The vision fair I cannot see,
I know its sun will rise;
I know its germ, divine and free,
Within my bosom lies:
This I is not the perfect I,
This, but a shadow man,
That is the true reality,
Which God Himself did plan.

Though yet our souls are far apart,
May here for ever be,
Yet, like mine Ideal Life, thou art
A grand Reality.
I know at last the morn will come,
And thou and I be one,
And in our home—our Father's home—
Shall meet, our journey done.

Then resting on His arms of love,
His Everlasting Arms,
Which 'neath us, round us, and above,
Will shelter from life's storms;
We'll climb unto the mountain-height,
Until the night be done,
And, in His glorious morning bright,
We, in His love, are one.

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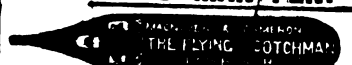
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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

JOE THE PEDDLER.

BY ELIZABETH LYSAGHT.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIVALS.

THE year 1875 had lost its first youth. Summer had come laughing into the glad world, bringing with it, to town dwellers, unwelcome heat, and choking dust, and noisome smells, but to the happy country folk all sorts of rare and lovely gifts, asking not a penny in return. Roses, blood red, ivory white, deep yellow; lillies, pure and stately, like chalices, from which the "brown-belted bee" drank his full of sweetness.

In the little garden on the southern slope of a hill, where vegetables, and fruit, and flowers grew and flourished together, all these and a hundred other commoner flowers sent out their incense to the warm breeze.

The farmhouse at "Binder's Bargain" was old-fashioned, picturesque, and roomy. The ceilings had great black oak beams across them, the windows were wide but low, with latticed panes. Nobody knew why it was called by so queer a name; in the memory of "the oldest inhabitant" it bore no other. If there ever had been a Binder who bargained for the lands and got them, even his identity was a mere shadow. Still the name remained.

"And a sweet bit of land it is!" the farmer, old Mr. Waller, would say of his farm. "None of your rubbishy sand and gravel—tillage and pasture as 'good as good.'" And farmer Waller was a man who knew his business. A man who could still go to fair and market, and buy and sell, and stand over his men all the long autumn day. "With all these brats," he would say, "I have to mind the work." He had a large family, poor

man. First of all there was pretty Bessie, the rural belle, the first wife's only child, then the boys and girls of the second marriage, and their name was Legion. Bessie knew how many step-brothers and sisters she had, for it fell to her lot, with more than plenty of other work, to mend, and stitch for, and to teach them. And for payment, save and except the rich consciousness of doing her duty, I fear hers was "monkey's allowance"—viz., "more kicks than halfpence."

Poor Bessie! Pretty Bessie! She did not think herself to be pitied at all; on the contrary, there was a spring of happiness within her that enabled her to bear all the hard words that her step-mother lavished on her. Not that the second Mrs. Waller was a fiend in human form—not at all!

She was only a bad-tempered, peevish, exacting woman, who took a desponding view of things and people, who prided herself, justly or unjustly, on being of a better family than her husband, and who was bitterly envious of Bessie's good looks. That was indeed her prevailing foible—envy. She could not enjoy what she had because others had things she hadn't. But she was a woman, and had a woman's weakness for dress, and on the tenth of June, 1875, she stood in the neat kitchen—neat and clean and spotless it was—and bade "Joe the Peddler" open his pack, and exhibit its manifold contents. Joseph Ingleden was a tall man, brown as a berry, with a slight stoop, a pair of kind dark eyes, and a plain shrewd face. In other places in England the very name of peddler was fading away; railways were so plentiful that every Jack and Jill could go to the nearest town and buy cheap Manchester and Bradford goods almost as reasonably as they could in Lancashire or Yorkshire.

But "Binder's Bargain," shut in by a circle of hills, far away from any town, quite out of the line of any railroad, was very thankful when Joe Ingleden's cart and brown mare stopped at the white gate.

Mrs. Waller knew then that she had a good

chance of getting what she very dearly loved—a bargain!

Other folk said that Joe knew the value of his lace, and muslin, linen, and hosiery too well, and that his prices were rather high, and Joe himself did not deny that in London, or any big town, you might suit yourself at a cheaper rate.

"But I've to keep myself and the mare, and pay the tax, and lay by for a rainy day," he would say, and then, what with his good-humoured eloquence and the fact that there was no town near them, the scattered purchasers who lived in the lonely country valley always ended by buying from him.

There was one man, indeed, who never spent a penny in that way.

Young Draper, who had just come into the proud possession of a snug farm adjacent to "Binder's Bargain," sneered at Joe, his cart, and brown mare.

Draper was a bit of a dandy. He had lived in Manchester for some years, and had come home to take possession of his inheritance. In Manchester he had learned many things—to value money rather more highly than it is worth; to value himself, too, at an equal rate. He was spoiled by flattering, for he was a comely, handsome fellow, with a rich, mellow voice, and the trick of using it in song, as if he quite felt what he was singing, and when, of a winter's night, he sat by the fire, and the rich, sweet notes of "Barbara Allen" or "The Banks of Allan Water" were poured forth as if his very heart went with them, it was no wonder that even cross Mrs. Waller was moved to admiration, while Bessie, sitting in the shade, let her busy knitting-needles stop for a moment, while her hand rapidly brushed away something from her eyes.

"Jamie Draper is very sweet upon our Bessie," the farmer said to his wife.

Mrs. Waller did not quite know whether to be glad or sorry.

The question had two sides to it—one, the desirability of getting the handsome, winning lass out of the house, and thus not only relieving her family of all expense, but removing a dangerous rival from Nancy, the elder girl of the second marriage, who was tall, and thin, and plain; the other, that when Bessie went, it would be costly and hard to fill her place. Bessie did the work of two servants, she was always up with the lark, always at work, always cheerful, *always pretty!* In this last lay the bitter drop that made the whole draught unpalatable to Mrs. Waller.

For Nancy would *never* be pretty! Those who know how deep a well of maternal pride is hidden in a woman's breast can make some excuse for her. A better excuse she had, poor soul! for her captiousness, and unfair jealousy, and ill-temper.

Her youngest boy was a "softy." He was a mischievous, half-witted creature, always in trouble, perverse and troublesome, with just enough sense to guide him ever on the wrong path.

"I've the neatest things in the trade to show you, Mrs. Waller, ma'am," said Joe, unfastening the great bale of goods; "I've a French cachemire, between port wine and claret, that would just suit you—a real beauty; and as for muslins, why I've some such as the Princesses wear at Windsor—here's a pattern now, fit for the girls, an ivy leaf and forget-me-not."

And he looked from under his long eye-lashes at Mrs. Waller to see if his hints were taken.

"Muslin is poor wear," she said, shortly; "Bessie has more gowns than she can wear—there are some of her mother's in the oak chest."

"Oh! they'd be ever so much too old-fashioned for her," said Joe; "and I've enough for two gowns—she and her sister could wear them."

Mrs. Waller stooped and fingered the muslin. Nancy wanted a Sunday gown—she was growing—the ivy leaf and forget-me-not would make a nice dress for her. As for buying one for Bessie, that would be absurd. Why, she hadn't a penny of fortune, except whatever her father could spare her. "Now my children," she thought, "will have all *my* money."

And so she drew out her purse, and slowly counted out the money. She got the muslin a bargain, it was honestly worth more than the price he asked for it.

Then there was white linen to be looked at, and then some wool for socks.

"The boys do wear out theirs as if they had horns instead of toes," she said.

And so the wool was bought, and Bessie would have the knitting of the socks.

Mrs. Waller treated Joe Ingleden with respect. He came of "decent people" like herself, and his father had once owned a nice farm at the other side of the "Giant's Heel," the mountain that sheltered "Binder's Bargain" and the whole of the vale from the sharp nor'-east wind.

And everybody knew that he was making money, and saving it; and then she knew the value of her purchases, and knew that they *were* bargains, and where is the female soul that does not greatly rejoice in a *real bargain*?

What she did not know was this—that Joe, middle-aged as he was, and old bachelor as he was said to be, would have gladly given the lace, cachemire, muslin, and all for one word, one kind look from Bessie Waller. But you may be sure that Bessie knew it perfectly well. Mrs. Waller was by no means the woman to lavish hospitable cares on even a valued friend like Joe. She did not ask him to stay for their six o'clock supper, but she graciously bade him smoke his pipe in the porch, while the mare ate her oats in the stable. The farmer was not visible—he never appeared until the men came in from their work.

Joe lit his pipe, and went out into the porch, where the red roses were showing their rich beauties through the rough rustic wood-work. But he did not stop there. He walked down the narrow path leading to the garden, the faint smoke from his pipe curling in the air. How sweet and pleasant everything was! How good it was to be in the country! He had read—this peddler who went about with lace, and muslin, and so forth—a book to him was a friend, a thing to be valued, to be made much of. And he could and did enjoy the exquisite beauty that the fair June day brought with it. The deep, deep blue of the sky, the hills that stood out in bold relief against it, the scent of the flowers, the caressing touch of the west wind that seemed as if it blew from Paradise itself, and had no taint of sinful earth about it! The man, peddler though he was, noticed and admired all these things, and a grave smile stole over his dark face. It was a day to be happy—all the world seemed happy—it was surely a lucky time, an auspicious moment!

In the distance he saw, amongst the apple trees, a sudden glimpse of a dark blue dress. Bessie, certainly—she was fond of dark blue. Why not carry out his day-dream, and go to her, and tell her how he cared for her, and ask her to be his wife? Why, indeed!

Bessy it certainly was, for five minutes afterwards she was standing at the very end of the garden—with *somebody*!

Somebody who had come across the fields, and through the apple orchard, and so entered the garden.

Somebody who had Bessie's pretty brown hand in his, and who was calling her his own—his darling!

It was James Draper, looking his very best—ah! you may be sure the sad eyes, that for one despairing moment watched the lovers through the thick but broken shade of a great pear tree, took in every detail of his fortunate rival's dress and person—the well-made coat, the gay scarf and pin; above all, the gay youth and careless ease that the man of middle-age can never attain to. Joe had had his day-dreams—Heaven help him!—as we all have. He had dreamt many a time of a home, the old home on the side of the "Giant's Heel," where he and Bessie should live so happily!

For this he had saved, and worked. All for Bessie! He knew that her life was a hard one, that Mrs. Waller No. 2 did not love this bonny winsome creature, by whose side her own girls looked uncomely and awkward.

And Joe had heard, and had been glad to hear, that young Draper had been flirting with the handsome daughter of the landlord of the principal inn at Bar Haven.

Joe "took" Bar Haven in his rounds, and had seen Draper making what looked like love to black-eyed Bella Douglas. To be sure Bella was not fit to hold "a candle" to Bessie in Joe's opinion; she was a strapping lass, with bold eyes and a laugh for all the world, but she was the only child, and everybody knew that Archie Douglas was a rich man for his line of life.

Now the truth was made plain. James Draper had been flirting with Bella, but making *love* to Bessie! And middle-aged though he was, and all unversed in the ways of the world, he knew how fine but great a distinction there is between these two acts. The lovers did not know of the involuntary spy; he went slowly up the garden path, almost hating the bright beauty of the June roses and the summer sun that shone on his misery. He walked slowly to the farm stable, where his stout brown mare, well bred and well fed, was finishing her dole of oats. Mrs. Waller came round thither. She was in a good humour for her. He had given her a good bargain, and she loved saving even a penny, and she was glad, too, that there was a chance of getting rid of Bessie. It was a little too bad that Bessie should make so good a match; but anything was better than having her pink and white face always to the fore, since the farmer *would* make such a fool of himself about her, and the young man was nearly, if not quite as bad.

Human nature, ladies and gentleman, being much the same in the dwellers in the farmhouse, and in my lady, in her boudoir in Park Lane.

"Won't you come in, and take a mug of beer?" she said, still carefully abstaining from any offer of more substantial refreshment.

But Joe would not, he could not accept the proffered draught.

"Let me begone out of this," he said to himself. He hated and dreaded the possible encounter with Bessie and her lover. The man was almost broken-hearted; there is such a thing, I can tell you, as having your heart broken, and still living on. He fastened the straps and buckles of the cart, and got up into his driving seat, making dull and mechanical replies to Mrs. Waller. He could not even say a kind word to the "softy," poor little Andrew, who had ventured into the stable-yard. The poor little lad knew Joe, and loved him; his meek face, on which was written the sad affliction of his young life, always brightened up when Joe came. But to-day, though poor Andrew called out his name in the broken, imperfect accents that were so pitiful to hear, Joe only nodded sadly, and drove on. Another time he would have taken the little lad up, and let him hold the reins, and drive slowly down the road. But not to-day—oh! not to-day! And Andrew, disconsolate, was left alone, for Mrs. Waller, as she said very truly, "had no patience with him." Little of that goodly virtue had she at any time, or with any one, but she had *none* for the poor boy who had always been a care, and was certain always to be a burden to her.

She was a hard woman; and men, women and children were sent into the world to *work*. What was the use, and where was the place, of a lad who never could learn his letters, or keep his fingers from being cut, or his clothes from being torn?

Bessie loved him, as a good woman always will love so feeble a creature, whose very wants make him an object of affection. But Bessie—ah! my poor Bessie, I hate to think of the evil time that is coming when your bright life shall be clouded—was standing by the old apple-trees in the sunny garden, listening to Jamie Draper's loving assurances that, though he might say civil things to Archie Douglas' handsome black-eyed daughter, he only really loved Bessie!

She had heard this sweet story many a time before, but it was quite as pleasant to hear now. He really thought he was speaking the truth, but it was not the *whole* truth. He did not confess it to her, but the fact was that he had hesitated often before asking her to marry him, and even as her blue eyes looked into his, and her cheek blushed rosy red with happy, innocent joy, he could not help thinking—

"She is a good girl, and I am very fond of her, but—" (you see there was a "but" in the case)—"Bella Douglas is cleverer, and has more *go* in her, and will be rich besides, and Bessie has nothing but her pretty face and good temper." Money, and the love of it, and the longing for it is not confined to Lombard Street or the Stock Exchange.

In this quiet valley, shut out from the world, Mammon has his temples and worshippers. Bessie did not know that her lover and affianced husband hesitated for a moment between the two possible brides. How gaily and lightly she ran along the garden path, ready to face her step-mother's cold looks, the hard work that only ceased when bed-time came, the troublesome children for whom she did so much, yet who seemed to love her so little! How sweetly the flowers smelt—how fresh was the still air!

As she opened the garden gate her step-mother

came hurrying towards her, her brow black with fear and wrath.

"What have you been at? Where have you been? Loitering about like a fool with James Draper, when you were most wanted here."

"What's the matter?" said Bessie fearfully.

"The matter! You may well ask. While you were loitering there, not caring what was going on, Andrew fell into the mill-stream. What do you care if the boy is drowned or not?"

This was bitter injustice, but Mrs. Waller was never just. Her boy's danger only whetted her ungenerous wrath.

"Drowned!" The rich colour left Bessie's face.

"All but; might as well for all you cared. He was taken out, and is alive, but that's all."

The poor softy! Poor Andrew! Bessie flew into the house; the little lad was lying wrapped up in blankets on his bed; they had poured whisky down his throat, and the life had come back to him, but his feeble wits were wandering.

Nancy stood by him, awed into silence.

"He does not know me," said Bessie. His cheeks, that but a little time before were pale as the leaves of a wet lily, were now flushed. His eyes were half open, his hands kept plucking at the blankets.

"Mother's gone to see if father would fetch the doctor," said Nancy.

At this moment in came Mrs. Waller all in a heat.

"Of course, now that he's wanted he can't be found. Like as not he's gone across to look at the Ayrshire calf that Robin Graem has got, and nobody knows when he'll be home."

"Let Reuben ride for the doctor," pleaded Bessie.

"There again! The mare has her shoes off, and couldn't trot a yard on the road, and who'll ride 'Rob Roy?'"

"I will—I can; he'll go quiet enough with the curb—do let me ride him, mother. I can go by the short cut, and if the doctor's at home, he'll be here in an hour."

There was no help for it. Bessie bade Reuben saddle the young horse, only half broken, and wild, and shy. Bessie was a fair rider, she was used to trotting along on the mare, going to and from fair or market, crossing the "Giant's Heel" by rough bridle roads, impassable to any wheels. But "Rob Roy" was a very different sort of animal.

Bessie knew no fear as she cantered down the lane. She meant to take the shortest way to the doctor's house, and he could drive round by the road.

Reuben, the shock-headed lad, watched her as she rode off.

"I do hope that he'll play no tricks, neither," he said to himself, shaking his rough head.

None knew better than he how strong and uncertain, and even dangerous the young horse could be.

* * * * *

An hour afterwards, Doctor Percy was standing by Andrew's side, feeling his pulse, and looking at his flushed face.

Bessie had met him close to his own house as he was driving home, and at her request he had at once turned his horse's head and driven swiftly to "Binder's Bargain."

"It is merely the shock that ails him," said he. "A composing draught will get him some sleep, and in the morning he'll be all right."

Then he mounted his gig, and drove away.

The sun went down in the west behind the mountains, the silver stars appeared in the calm sky, but Bessie came not.

"As sure as fate," said Mrs. Waller, "she has met young Draper again, and stopped to talk nonsense with him."

The farmer, who loved his Bessie all the more because, with the exception of the poor "softy," nobody else cared for him in the house, went to the gate and down the road, stopping now and then to listen, and shading his eyes with his brown hand, the better to look into the gathering gloom.

But he saw and heard nothing. It was quite late when clattering hoofs were heard, and Rob Roy, riderless, galloped up to the stable.

Riderless—and where was Bessie?

The stars in the deep sky, and the young crescent moon were silent—held their peace. The soft night breeze kept its own secret. Poor Bessie, she lay on a heap of stones on the mountain path as a dead creature lies.

CHAPTER II.

"NO HELP FOR IT, YOU SEE."

JOE INGLEDEN went on his way—a sad way. Narrow custom kept him within its bounds; he must work on, since there could be no play for him; the pleasure of making money for another was lost; but a man of middle-age cannot turn from the old routine, even though the afternoon of life's day is a cloudy one. But there were no clouds at all on the material noon of that June day. He drove along, heavy-hearted, he had to finish his rounds as best he might. The houses lay far apart. He had to make a detour of some miles to arrive at the Widow Orlebad's cottage—a rich woman who, widow though she was, loved a new fashion even in her sombre black gown, and loved a bit of gossip too.

And Joe Ingleden, who visited Manchester, Leeds, and Bradford—ay, London itself, it was said—was a welcome visitor.

Then from the widow (who found Joe unusually dull that afternoon) to a lonely house where two bachelor brothers lived, who might want small masculine trifles; then home for the night, to Bar Haven. His goings and comings were methodical and punctual. Everybody in the valley knew that they could depend on Joe, and waited till his coming brought the things they needed. And, as was necessary, he had his programme already cut out and arranged, even for months ahead.

The stars were shining, the shadows of the full-leaved trees were black on the ground, for there was a young bright moon, when he came to the road that led, in one direction to Bar Haven, in the other to "Binder's Bargain." The tree shadows were black, but it wasn't a shadow that made the mare start aside and tremble.

Joe looked to see what had frightened her, and saw—what was it?

A fallen tree? No! Dark as it was beneath the trees, he knew in a moment that no tree lay

like that. In a moment, but little thinking what the reality was, he was down from his driving seat. The mare had got over her momentary alarm, and stood like a rock, answering with a prick of her ears to his customary "Steady, my lass."

The face that he lifted up was not whiter than his own. A woman's face.

"Bessie!" That was all he could say.

She was dead; that was his first thought. For a moment a fierce joy mingled with the passionate sorrow. She could never be James Draper's wife. Then the flood of intense grief swept away this natural but selfish feeling.

He put his hand on her heart; it beat, ever so faintly. There was blood on her cheek, and as he wiped it away it flowed. There was not a moment to be lost. He thanked God that he had come by that road instead of choosing the other; and, lifting her tenderly, he laid her in his cart, placing her so that, by turning a little in the driving seat, he could support her head. When he drove on, with a fearful care lest they should jolt over any rough stones, and the moonlight fell on her face, he shuddered, for he then could see how blood-stained it was.

But she lived, she lived!

It seemed an age of weary misery as he drove along; it seemed an age until he came in sight of the white house. There were lights in the lower windows and figures were moving about. The farmer met him at the gate.

"She is here. I found her lying on the ground at the Three Elms," said Joe.

"We've been out looking for her; I've only come back now. I thought she'd have come back the other way."

The cart crept slowly up to the house. A melancholy ending to so fair a day!

Mrs. Waller, for once shaken out of her hard and envious shell, came in haste to lift her out. Bessie gave no sign of life, except by the faint pulsation of the heart.

"Come in and rest yourself," said the farmer, touched by Joe's white face.

"No, no, time enough for that; who's to fetch the doctor?"

Mrs. Waller wrung her hands. "And he was here this evening. Didn't you know? Andrew was near drowned, and it was to fetch him the girl went."

"Lend me a saddle, and I'll take the mare—she can go out of harness."

"La! Mr. Ingleden, and you've been a long way already—you'll just kill the mare and yourself."

Joe ground his teeth before he could find the quick reply, "Even so! If it's doing her a service what better way could I lose my life, as for the mare, if she can only take me to the doctors, I'll ask no more of her!"

The saddle on which the farmer rode to market was fitted on the mare. "Now, my lass, do your best, I must press you, there's no help for it, you see!"

It was a long and a rough road, the same over which poor Bessie had galloped on the same errand.

There was good blood in the veins of the stout mare, and it stood her in good stead that night.

There was foam on her bridle, and her flanks

were wet and heaving when Joe stopped at the doctor's house.

"What do you want? Who's there?" The doctor asked these questions, putting his night-capped head out of window.

In a few words Joe told him all.

"Bless my soul; and I've only come back from Binder's Bargain. Poor lass," and he rubbed his eyes, and hurried into his clothes.

"I must wake up the boy, and get my gig," said he. As he came out into the night air, he looked at the pale man and the tired mare.

"Go into the house, and lie down on the sofa in the parlour," he said; "that poor beast wants rest, the boy can take her to my stable."

And Joe consented, for the doctor's light gig was too light for *two*, and the mare was dead beat.

It was quite daylight when the doctor came home, and was met at the door by Joe.

"Bless me! and why are not you asleep?"

"How is she—will she *live*?"

"She's come to herself, oh yes; I think there's no fear for her life. She's young, you see—that young Draper was there, like a mad man; they're to be married you know; poor lass, it's a pity."

So in the old house under the hill there were two people sick unto death. In one room, poor Andrew, who was feverish and wandering, calling aloud always for "Bessie." Poor Bessie, lying helpless and wounded, like a crushed flower that some careless heel has trodden upon! With a heart heavy as lead did Joe Ingleden set out on his travels again.

He rode the good mare to the farmhouse, and there got his cart. How silent and sorrowful everything was! Even Mrs. Waller had lost her old sharpness of look and voice.

Joe stood in the sunny porch with her before he mounted his cart.

"When she gets better—quite herself," he said, "tell her that I was very sorry—that's all."

"Indeed I will," she said; "and I'll tell her how 'twas you found her, and brought her home. The doctor says she'll do—I'm sure I hope so; I'm almost out of my wits myself with one thing and the other; here's James Draper been like a mad man all the morning—thank goodness he had to go home to look after his hay."

"I suppose—when she gets well, they'll be married?" He could hardly say the bitter words.

"I suppose so. Well, good-bye, and good luck to you, Mr. Ingleden."

Bessie came "to herself," as they say, very soon. When she *did*—ah! when she *did*—it was quite another face than her old winsome one that looked at her from the glass. Then she knew why they had looked at her so pitifully, even Mrs. Waller. She knew why it was that the doctor had said to her, trying to speak cheerfully, "You mustn't fret you know, you must try and be thankful that you escaped with your life."

Her face was all scarred. The rough stones had done their work. There was a great cut from the temple to the chin. Never, never more should Bessie Waller look at herself in the glass with innocent gladness that she should be so fair.

Bruised severely she was, but no bones were broken. For a time she suffered severely from the fall, but gradually she grew better—able to sit up, to go down stairs, and able to see her lover.

"Why didn't you tell me how changed she

was?" said James Draper with tears in his eyes, as he left the room.

"I did; but you wouldn't believe me," said Mrs. Waller.

After that first visit the young man bore the sight of her changed face better.

To be sure it was a busy time, as he said. The late hay had to be carried, and he did not come often to "Binder's Bargain."

When he did come his visit was like sunshine to poor Bessie. But clouds obscure the brightest noon, and Bessie's life grew speedily very dark.

"James Draper hasn't been here for a month," said Mrs. Waller.

"He's very busy," said the poor girl, flushing a painful red.

"Busy indeed. I tell you what, Bessie, I'm sure he's not to be trusted. I didn't like telling you before, not till you got a bit strong, but I hear he's as thick as thieves with old Douglas, and that Bella and he are flirting. And if I were you, Bessie, I'd call him over the coals, and tell him I'd not have it."

"Don't cry, Bessie, don't cry," said poor Andrew, who by this time had quite recovered, stealing his little thin hand into hers.

"Indeed, I wouldn't cry," said Mrs. Waller, "but I'd give him a piece of my mind, Bessie."

James Draper was either too busy to pay visits, or some other reason kept him away from "Binder's Bargain," and he and Bessie drifted apart without any effort on her part to keep him faithful to her.

Neither would she let her father or step-mother remonstrate with him.

"I am not like what I was when he said he loved me," she thought. She was very proud, with the maidenly decent pride that belongs to all good women, and when she did meet him as he rode slowly home from Bar Haven, and as she walked along the lane, she was more collected and at ease than he was.

He got off his horse and shook hands with her; there was some hesitation in his manner.

"I'm glad I met you, James," she said, colouring painfully, but speaking with calm distinctness. "I meant to have written, but I can say what I must say here."

"Well, I'm sorry I've not been able to go to see you of late, but you see——"

She put a gentle hand on his arm.

"The truth is best, James. I want to tell you that all is at an end between us—for ever, and though we can be friends, we can't be more."

"I suppose you've heard that I've been after Bella Douglas?" I declare, Bessie, I did like you, and all that, but you see—I'm sure you see that you're not very strong now, and I'd want a wife that 'ud do her work, and so——"

"Yes, I know. Well, James, say good-bye, and God bless you, and—and—I do hope you'll be happy."

She could say no more. She turned and walked away from him, leaving him at once glad and relieved, sorry and somewhat ashamed.

That night she told her father and Mrs. Waller.

"He will marry Bella Douglas!" cried the latter with angry heat.

"You are not to be angry with him," said Bessie pleadingly; "he could not help himself! And it was I who gave him up."

Poor Bessie! She did her best to smile, and seem happy, and nobody knew how, when she was in her little room at night, the bitter, bitter tears fell like rain.

The farmer was very angry, but his hands were tied. Bessie would not allow any one to blame James Draper.

He did not come again to "Binder's Bargain." Very soon they heard that he was to be married to Bella Douglas; and before the harvest was carried home, they were married.

It was on a sunny September day that Joe Ingleden drove through Bar Haven once again. He had been on a "professional tour" through the Lake Country, visiting the busy manufacturing towns to renew his stock-in-trade. The farm on the hill, his old home, the home he had hoped should have been his—and Bessie's—waited in vain for him. By-and-by, when he was old, and stiff, and grey, he might give up his wandering life, and "settle down."

But a wandering life best suits a mind ill at ease. When he was buying and selling, visiting the big towns, and driving hither and thither, the pain at his heart was less felt.

The bells at the old church-tower, that stood square and sturdy in the green churchyard, were jangling away joyfully.

As he passed the gate, a little procession came forth, the men with favours in their Sunday coats, the women brave in white bonnets and gloves.

He checked the mare, and presently out came the bride and "groom."

James Draper and Bella Douglas!

He looked again, hardly crediting his eyes—but there they were!

And Bessie?

He drove into the yard of the little inn, where he always put up at Bar Haven.

"So there has been a marriage here to-day?" he said to the landlady—a friend of his.

"Ay, handsome Jamie Draper is tied down at last! I doubt he's got a handful—Bella Douglas that was has a bit of a temper."

"I thought he was going to be married to somebody else?"

"Ah! poor Bessie Waller! That came to an end when she lost her good looks. Jamie Draper was never the lad to keep true to her when she was no longer the beauty she was."

"Ah! And she? How does she bear it? How is she?"

"Good as gold, poor lass! But you'd hardly know her. Dear, dear, when I remember what a bonny face she had, I do pity her, surely!"

* * * * *

"Tell me, Bessie, that some time or other you'll come to care for me, and marry me—you don't know how I love you, better I think than any man ever loved a girl before."

It was Joe Ingleden that was speaking, and Bessie—with cast-down eyes and a hot blush on her face, her poor face, altered indeed it was!—was listening.

She said to herself—

"He pities me—because I am quite ugly now, and if I take him at his word, he'll be sorry, perhaps." So with this poisoned shaft ranking in her heart, she told him he was very good and kind, and she liked him very much, but—she would not marry him!

In vain he pleaded his cause, Bessie did like him, could have loved him, but would not say "Yes."

"Then I'd better go; oh! Bessie, life is not worth having unless you share it with me."

"You'll be happy some time, Joe; you're too kind and good to have all your life spoiled because a poor, ugly creature like me won't take what you offer."

"She can't love me, because she loved James Draper so well," thought Joe, broken-hearted, and with tears in his honest eyes that he would not let fall, he wrung her hand, and left her.

A younger man, one less in earnest, less distrustful of himself and all he had to offer, would have persisted, but Joe was too humble-minded to do so.

To him she was fair and dear as ever, as much exalted over and beyond him as if she had been a queen in the purple.

And so he turned away, with a sigh that was half a sob.

And Bessie remained in the little rustic summer-house, where he had found her, miserable enough, and ready to call him back, and tell him that after all she loved him, and would be his wife.

"Why are you crying, Bessie? What did Joe say to you?" said poor Andrew, stealing in, and standing at her side.

Softly as he was, she was just in the mood to be glad of any confidante, to whom she might, in safety, pour out her trouble.

"Joe was wanting me to take something, and I was a fool, that's all, and refused it; and now I'm sorry. And he's gone, and he'll never, never come here again."

"Don't you like him, Bessie?"

"I do, Andrew, I do; better than anybody else in the world. But I've done it of my own choice, and so I must put up with it," and Bessie cried as if her heart would break.

Here broke in Mrs. Waller's shrill voice, calling "Andrew! Andrew!" and the boy, after kissing Bessie with a fondness that ought to have been some consolation to her, crept away.

As he did so, a figure darkened the entrance to the little summer-house.

It was Joe. A changed and triumphant Joe, who caught her to his breast, and so held her, and would not let her go.

"I came back to say 'Good-bye,'" he said, "and I heard what you said; and now, my Bessie, I know the truth, and here I'll stay till you tell me with your own lips that you'll take my love and all I have, and be my darling wife."

So Bessie had to consent, and Joe was not long in finding out the truth; how she had refused him, thinking that it was more from pity than from love that he had asked her to marry him.

Joe gave up his travelling, and became a farmer, and they lived in the old homestead that had once belonged to his people.

He grew young again, so happy was he, and Bessie quite believed him when he told her that in his sight she was lovely as ever.

One guest was always welcome there, poor Andrew, who would continue to be a child even when there was a beard on his chin—always harmless, always loving, worshipping his Bessie, and quite ready to give Joe, for her sake, a share in his innocent heart.

The Bar Haven gossips had it that Jamie Draper's handsome wife was a bit of a shrew, but that may be *only* gossip.

To Bessie, as the years pass by, time brings new duties, new pleasures, new happiness. Sorrow too, doubtless, since life has its thorns with its roses, but she has never regretted becoming the wife of Joe Ingleden.

After they had been man and wife for some time he confessed to her that he had twice been an unintentional eaves-dropper, the first time when he had learnt the fatal truth that she and James Draper were affianced lovers.

"That was a bad time" said Joe; "but the next made up for it, for I found out that you *did* care for me, my Bessie."

Poor Andrew has never found out what good thing it was that Joe offered her, and that she refused.

IN SHALLOW WATERS.

BY A. ARMITT,

Author of "The Garden at Monkholm."

PART III.—continued.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER VI.

A LONELY OLD AGE.

KATE had already reported at home something of her first meeting with the stranger, without arousing the alarm or suspicion of her aunt. For Miss Leake's shrewdness was tempered by dulness; she was quick sighted where her vigilance had been roused, but sometimes very blind in other directions. Therefore when her niece told her of some old man who had asked about the Red Cow, and who seemed to remember her mother very well, Miss Leake did not even try to think who it could be.

"Everybody knew your mother, of course," she said; "people who never spoke to her were glad to get a look at her; and some of the farms have changed hands several times. If this man lived here twenty years ago he would be sure to know your mother. Everybody noticed her; there wasn't such another girl in Elmdale!"

When, however, the adventure of the broken bridge was related to her, she thought it right to show some displeasure.

"I wish, Kate, that you wouldn't put yourself in such difficulties; I shall be obliged to forbid you to go out alone, or at least to go up the hill-sides so recklessly."

"There was not any difficulty, Aunt; I should only have had to go round by the other bridge, and be late for lunch."

"Then why didn't you go round?"

Kate had no reason to give except one, which, if she had uttered it, would have astonished herself as well as her aunt; some one—with no authority over her at all—had spoken authoritatively, and she had obeyed; that was the simple truth of the matter.

On the next day—the second day after Henry Dilworth's arrival in Elmdale—she was riding past the Red Cow with Jack Langford, when Jane Dodd stopped her at the gate, and asked her to go in again and see the baby.

"Not that it's so much the baby, after all," Jane explained when they were inside, "as it's the old gentleman staying here who is ill; and I'm sure he ought to see the doctor, but he won't hear of it. He's asked more than once if you'd be looking in to see the baby, which makes me think that if you'd advise him about the doctor he might listen."

"Oh, no, Jane, why should he? I couldn't do such a thing," Kate answered quickly.

Meanwhile Jack, who had remained with the horses outside, received a message by a small boy to the effect that the gentleman in the parlour would be glad if he would go in and speak to him. He went with alacrity, having a very distinct suspicion who the gentleman in the parlour might be.

Henry Dilworth was sitting in an arm-chair, with a rug wrapped about his feet. He had a look of great suffering and exhaustion; and he did not attempt to rise.

"I'm sorry to see you so ill, sir," Jack said, as he went forward.

"I have been so before. It will pass away. Thank you for coming to see me. I am a stranger to you, but I knew your uncle very well."

"Did you indeed, sir? He was a very nice fellow, I suppose."

Jack's manner was genuinely respectful, in a pleasant though rather old-fashioned manner. He was aware that the man before him, if he showed symptoms now of weakness and indecision, had once been stronger than himself both mentally and physically; it was the decline of a Goliath that he looked upon; and he admired the giant for what he had been as well as for what he was. He met with frank fearlessness the keen gaze fixed upon him, and he waited to hear more.

"Miss Dilworth is with you, I think," the stranger said, with some effort.

"She is looking at Mrs. Dodd's baby," Jack replied, with conscientious and commonplace exactness. If he guessed at the elements of a romance in the situation, he was not the one to feed it with fine words.

"Is she fond of children?" Henry Dilworth asked, remembering that his wife had never been so.

"I can't really say," Jack replied, "the mothers are, I suppose, and they get her to look at them."

"She seems to be very good to the poor."

"I don't know that she is; the poor people like her, and the rich too, but she is one of those persons who win gratitude easily; she's so uncommonly pleasant to look at, such a very charming young lady altogether, don't you know?"

"Ah," said Henry Dilworth, quickly, "you find her so, do you?"

"I should have a curious taste if I didn't, sir, don't you think?"

"She seems quite happy, quite content," Henry Dilworth went on, without answering his query, "you are with her a great deal, I think. You can tell me if she is so."

"Well, sir, if you want to know, you could find all that out for yourself, I should fancy."

Henry Dilworth's face had flushed a little at

Jack's last words which he fancied conveyed a reproof, but his eye kept clear and cool. He was indifferent to Jack's opinion of him, so long as he satisfied his own conscience. He had only one vulnerable point in the armour of simplicity and strength with which he had long met the world; but he had been struck hard in that one point; it had once been the love of his wife, it was now the love of his daughter. The dissatisfaction of one or the other was the knife which could cut off the magic locks of Samson, and leave him to stumble blindly—but never ignobly—to his end.

"You think it strange perhaps that I should ask such questions. Some day you will know that I am not taking an unwarrantable liberty."

"I didn't suppose it. I meant just what I said, that you could find out these things for yourself, sir."

"I may not have the time, or opportunity. I am obliged to you for coming in to see me. I wanted to speak to you and look at you."

"I hope you are satisfied," Jack said, with a look of subdued amusement.

"Yes, I think you are an honest man."

This strange remark was uttered with a quietness that robbed it of its impertinence.

"Is there anything an honest man could do for you, sir?" Jack inquired. "You are here alone and ill."

"There is certainly nothing that a dishonest man could do," Henry Dilworth answered with a slight smile; "and as for you, if there's anything you can do for me, it will be done without my asking."

"I take it as a compliment that you think so," said the younger man gravely.

"Are you here, Jack?" uttered a voice at the door at that moment.

"Yes; come in," he answered, briskly throwing the door open.

Kate stood on the threshold. There was an air of shyness and hesitation about her, but the eyes of the stranger met hers, and drew her forward. They were the eyes of a man who had long been hungry for what he now saw, but who was so evidently sad and limited in hope that even the satisfaction of his desires did not imply happiness.

"I am sorry you are ill," Kate said, as she advanced doubtfully. "I hope getting wet yesterday was not the cause of it."

"It's a strange thing if it was, for I've been used to all sorts of exposure all my life."

"I hope you will be better soon. Don't you think you ought to see a doctor? Mrs. Dodd thinks so."

"No, thank you; I have been like this before, and know what to do."

"Is there anything we can do for you?" she asked, still with some timidity, and glancing at Jack for encouragement.

"Nothing at all, except to come and see me again."

Kate's face flushed a little, but she went "Is there nothing we could get for you—jelly or fruit or soup?"

"No, thank you. I have all I want, unless," he added, with a sudden thought,—"you should make it yourself."

Kate's cheek flushed again, and she answered with unusual humility—

"I'm sorry—I'm afraid I don't know how."

Jack uttered an impatient "Pooh!" and she looked at him with deprecating apology.

"It is of no consequence," said the sick man with a little sigh; "I have all I want."

"Good-bye," said Kate; and then she repeated, "I hope you will be better."

She stood a moment looking at him almost wistfully; she felt herself to be the indirect cause of his illness, and she put down to this circumstance all the humility and desire to please which were contrary to her habitual moods; but she was actually under the influence of his strong character and feeling; and she was vaguely troubled by a sense of the strangeness of the situation, without any recognition of the truth coming near her thoughts.

"Good-bye," he said, and he hoped that she would come forward, and offer her hand; but she did not. She glanced at Jack as if to ask what to do next, and then went out.

Her sudden docility and appealing looks at him seemed to have made less impression on Jack than might have been expected. He did not take them as a compliment to himself at all. He said to her as she passed out—

"If you'll walk on, I will follow you directly;" and then he went back to Henry Dilworth.

"Sir," he said, "I don't wish to show any impertinent curiosity, but I can't help having a good idea who you are."

"Then you'll keep my secret," was the quiet answer.

"I think that it's a great pity it should be kept. Kate doesn't seem to you all she should be; but you have her at a disadvantage; she's true and good underneath."

"I have found no fault with my daughter," was the response, given in a singularly gentle tone.

"No, sir, you haven't. But I think a good deal of her, as perhaps you know; and I don't take it as a compliment to her that you don't tell her who you are."

"I want to spare her as much as possible."

"She can't have any feelings, sir, that ought to be spared in such a case. You don't understand her. She's been brought up to be what she is, and she has a kind of haughty way with her, I know. But it's very shallow; it isn't an inch deep. And there's nothing she's wished for so much as that you should come here or send for her."

Henry Dilworth's face lighted with surprise.

"Why didn't she tell me?"

"You see for yourself that she's proud; and she thought you didn't want her."

"Impossible!" said Henry Dilworth, with energy; but he added in another tone, "she hadn't seen me."

"Well, sir? I don't understand."

"You haven't had my experience. No, I will wait. She suspects nothing, and this isn't the moment to shock her by an unpleasant surprise. I'll wait at least until I am well; then my claim upon her will be simpler."

"I do think you are mistaken, sir. There's no better way of making friends with a woman than being ill and letting her nurse you."

"Not with all women," answered Henry Dilworth, who had his own memories.

"I'm sorry you've formed such a poor opinion

of Kate," said Jack persistently, "she doesn't deserve it."

Henry Dilworth smiled at the young man's strange championship.

"At any rate I am much obliged to you for your friendly feeling," he remarked.

"It isn't much to my credit," Jack replied honestly, "seeing how important your influence is likely to be to me. Good-bye, sir, and I hope you'll have changed your mind to-morrow."

He took his hat and departed, overtaking Kate near to her own house. She was lingering in the lane with an anxious and dissatisfied look.

"Did you think me very stupid, Jack?" she asked.

"A nice young colonist you would be!" he growled unmercifully, "couldn't make a little jelly for a sick man."

"I could learn. I hope he won't die. I feel that it's my fault for going down to the broken bridge."

"It was his fault more than yours, I suppose. It's the sort of splendid knight errantry all about nothing, that ought to be confined to the 'shore of old romance.' But there the ladies themselves always give the necessary care in return, they don't refer the heroes to their cooks."

"Oh, Jack, you aren't kind," said Kate in a low voice.

"Because I'm not sure that you are ready for kindness, or ought to have it."

They had reached The Stepping Stones, and this remark concluded the conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

"ENOUGH FOR A LIFETIME."

KATE sat in the drawing-room at the Stepping Stones that evening, her hands idle on her knee, and her mood one of dissatisfaction with herself. Her aunt was dissatisfied with her too, and expressed her feelings in this way—

"I wish you would get something to do, Kate; I don't like to see your fingers empty. If you only had a little knitting or crochet in your hand it would be different."

Kate procured the knitting, but did none of it; her mind was full of other things, and very soon an interruption occurred. It was announced that the doctor had called, and wished to see Miss Leake.

He had, in fact, a grave communication to make. Mrs. Dodd had become alarmed by the increasing illness of her lodger, and sent for medical help on her own responsibility. The nearest doctor was one who had attended Agnes Dilworth, and prescribed for the childish ailments of Kate. He remembered Henry Dilworth well, and, in spite of the change in his appearance, could not fail to recognize him. He had come now, with his patient's permission, to inform Miss Leake of this unexpected discovery, and to make a request to her.

Miss Leake received his communication with distress and dismay.

"It is quite possible," the doctor observed, "that in a few hours Mr. Dilworth may be very much better or—very much worse. He has had such attacks before, it seems, and got over them

quickly; but his strength is broken, he won't stand many of them."

"Yet he is not very old," Miss Leake said, "hardly over sixty."

"He looks much older."

"He would be very strong. I never heard of him being ill at all; nothing seemed to hurt him."

"He has had a fine constitution; but he has tried it too much, apparently. It might have been better if things had hurt him a little at an earlier stage. But he seems to me broken in more ways than one. He looks dispirited, his temperament is altered; instead of being full of energy and plans for the future, he falls quickly into a kind of quiet abstraction and hardly notices what is said. If I had not known him to have been eminently successful in his later undertakings, warmly appreciated by the geographical societies, and so on, I should say that he was a disappointed man."

"Oh, no," Miss Leake declared, "he can't be that. He has always lived the life that suited him best and never failed in any way."

"So I supposed. And he has had no money troubles or family cares? Since the death of his wife, I mean, of course; which occurred so long ago that it cannot count."

"None whatever. He has more money than he cares to spend, and he was never ambitious in that way. As to other things, he has been absolutely free to follow his own plans without an anxious thought."

"There must be something eccentric about him, or he wouldn't have come over in such a sudden manner without giving notice."

Miss Leake's countenance flushed at this remark.

"He must come here at once; what would it sound like if he died at the inn!"

"He can't be moved to-night, and he doesn't wish his daughter to be told who he is until he is better. He seems to think it would be a shock to her. He has a really morbid desire to spare her feelings, but at the present moment his wishes must not be opposed. Agitation and vexation would be fatal to him."

"Yet you say that he wants to see her."

"He has an evident longing for it; and as he may not live until to-morrow, I think that for her own sake his wish should be granted. When she comes to know that he is her father, she will feel it a comfort to have been kind to him."

"But how can I send her without telling her?"

"Leave it to me. With your consent I'll take her and bring her back."

Miss Leake rang the bell, and requested that Miss Dilworth should be sent to her.

"If only he had not come!" she could not help breathing in the moment of waiting; "it was so very ill-advised."

The doctor looked at her without replying. He had observed that this lady expressed not a single word of sympathy for her brother-in-law, or anxiety for his recovery.

"I begin to understand where the trouble lies," he said to himself. "This fervent explorer is not such an indifferent father as we have all been led to believe."

Kate came into the room with a look of surprise and inquiry. She glanced first at her aunt, and then at the doctor, who advanced to meet her.

"My dear young lady, are you inclined to do a kind action?" he said, looking into her face.

"If I can," she answered, with a slightly heightened colour.

"Your friend at Mrs. Dodd's is worse, is very ill, and has a fancy to see you. I promised him that, with your aunt's consent, I would bring you."

Kate looked at her aunt wonderingly, and then at him.

"Am I to go?"

"If you will. Put on your things as quickly as you can, and come."

Kate fled upstairs and was down again directly, dressed for the walk.

"That's a good girl," said the doctor, drawing her hand in his arm and patting it encouragingly; "you've got some of the qualities of a nurse—promptness is one, and silence is another. Have you noticed, Miss Leake, that she hasn't asked a single unnecessary question?"

Miss Leake tried to smile, and didn't succeed very well. But the doctor never insisted on the part he gave to people being properly played out; he was satisfied if they left him to speak and to act as if he had received the due response.

When Kate was walking by his side down the lane, however (all unconscious of Miss Leake's anxious face peering through the darkness after her), she abandoned her character for silence by observing—

"It is strange that he should care to see me. But he said that he knew my mother."

"Yes, he was very fond of your mother," the doctor replied heartily.

Kate fell into a reverie then, which lasted until they reached the Red Cow. The doctor's reply agreed with an earlier fancy of her own. The stranger had been a humble admirer of her mother's years and years ago; he had never forgotten her, had never married, and coming back at the end of his life to die in his native place, he had taken a strange interest in her daughter. Probably the adoration had been unspoken; it had been a silent worship of one above his hopes, but it might have been guessed at; and now in his old age and suffering it was natural for her mother's friends to treat his wishes with indulgence.

When Kate entered the room at the Red Cow, she perceived the stranger lying on a couch, wrapped in rugs. His face brightened as he saw her, and he said—

"Thank you for coming."

"I am glad if I can be of any use to you," Kate answered, going forward and offering her hand.

It was for the first time. He took it in both his and held it with a gentle strength, looking at her.

"You are very kind," he said.

"Tut, tut," observed the doctor, with friendly contempt, "she does what she's told, and she'll go on doing it. Now, Miss Dilworth, take that chair by the couch, and put your hand on his forehead; let me feel it—a nice, cool hand for a sick room—and sit there until I come back. I've a visit to pay higher up. Don't talk too much. It's soothing treatment the patient wants. Answer anything he asks you, but don't ask questions yourself. That's my business."

He went out, shutting the door after him

quietly, though without any appearance of care, and Kate was left alone with the sick man.

For a few moments he lay silent, with his eyes closed, realizing whose hand it was that rested on his forehead as no hand had ever rested before, since perhaps he was a tiny child in his mother's care. He was soothed beyond his hopes by Kate's silent presence, and it was some time before he cared to open his eyes and say to her, "Do you often visit people who are ill?"

"Not in this way, never before," she answered in a low voice.

"Then it must seem strange that I should ask for you, that your aunt should let you come."

"No, they told me—" Kate began in a low voice, and then she hesitated.

"What did they tell you?" he asked.

"That you were very fond of my mother." Her voice, though soft, was clear and easy to be heard. She knew that if she spoke at all it must be distinctly, that the sick man's attention might not be strained to listen.

His worn features flushed and his eye brightened at her explanation.

"Yes," he replied, "I was very fond of your mother; and I have come a long way to see her daughter."

"To see me? How strange!"

"Is it strange? I am a lonely man. I have led a lonely life. If I die to-night there is not a creature in the world to whom my death will bring any change or loss. But I should like you to know how much the thought of you has been to me, and that I thanked and blessed you for your goodness to-night."

"It is nothing," said Kate wondering that he should speak so strongly. "Is there really no one who would be sorry?"

"I am afraid not—I should say, I hope not. But I don't want to speak of myself; my life is nearly over, and my work, such as it was, done. I like to look at you and to think that you are happy, that your life is beginning well, and that you have all that you want. It is so, is it not?"

"Sir?" she said, doubtfully.

"You are happy, are you not?"

"I have every reason to be," she answered with a little pride.

"Yes, every reason," he repeated, closing his eyes; and after that he said no more.

Half an hour passed away; the room was dimly lighted; the sound was heard of the river flowing through the darkness outside; now and then a little gust of wind rustled the leaves of the trees and dashed a branch against the window pane. Henry Dilworth lay in a strange and peaceful dream. All the past swept before him with its changes and its contradictions, but through it all there was the consciousness of Kate's hand on his forehead, and her eyes shining in the gloom.

"She will be glad that she came to-night, poor child, if the end is to be soon," he thought, as her dress stirred faintly beside him.

The doctor returned with a certain quiet bustle that was characteristic of him; he was quiet for the sake of his patient's nerves and full of cheerful business for the sake of their spirits.

"And how are we?" he inquired, feeling his patient's pulse. "Better, quieter. You are a good nurse, Miss Dilworth, you have behaved nicely, you shall come again."

"Good-bye," said Henry Dilworth, taking his hand from the doctor to give it to Kate. "If I don't see you again, you will remember that I thought it worth while to have come half round the world for the sake of your kindness to me to-night."

"Oh," said Kate, "it is too much to say of such a little thing."

"It is not a little thing to me. I have never had so much before. Perhaps I shall never have so much again. It is enough, I suppose, for a lifetime. Good-bye."

Kate's eyes were full of tears as she left him and went out into the darkness. There was a pathetic history here which she did not understand; for it could not be mere sentiment which made this man, who had appeared so strong and self-contained, speak to her with deep though subdued emotion.

"Look to your feet," observed the doctor, as she stumbled down the step into the garden; "a nurse always sees where she is going, makes no mistakes, and, above all, is not infected by the patient's agitation."

(To be continued.)

THE YELLOW ROSE.

(For Music.)

I.

IT was near the lichen-covered orchard wall—

Marie met me on a balmy summer night,
I had robbed the garden of a yellow rose

And I gave it to my precious heart's delight.

Then pealed the Angelus bell

As the grey darkness fell,—

Though the day was dying, still the rose was bright!

II.

Soldiers summoned were, by war, to distant lands,
Where the gallant tricolor was carried—followed I:
Passed through the years by Africa's palms and
sand-hills,—

Under Mexican magnolias—wearily!

O for a single glance

At our beloved France!

But stern duty only answered—by-and-by.

III.

It was near the village churchyard's wicket gate—
Wild the morning, and the wind was bluff and
bold!

Marie saw I once again—a wasted saint—

I—a decorated colonel—stout and old!

In her book of prayer,

The yellow rose was there—

But the rose was spectral—and our hearts were
cold!

PAUL BENISON.

PEACE AND QUIETNESS.

BY LEOPOLD WAGNER.

IT has often been said that London excels every other place throughout the three kingdoms by virtue of the facilities which she possesses of feeding that vast tide of humanity which forms the largest populated city in the world. Apart, too, from provisions, there is no commodity under the sun that money may not procure, and in the greatest variety. Two things there are, however, which neither love nor money can, within a prescribed area of the metropolis, ever command. These are *Peace* and *Quietness*. Not that it would be for one moment desirable to quell the din and war of traffic as it falls upon the ear whilst perambulating its busy thoroughfares—sounds most potent, and to some temperaments, even sublime, in contrast with the monotonous calm of the country. But to one whose occupation and very existence are dependant upon the stillness of his surroundings—in order that his mind may retire, so to speak, within itself, so as to enable him to pour forth those literary efforts whereby he earns his daily bread—such angry turmoils with which his ears are constantly assailed must be calculated not only to retard his employment in a most serious degree, but, in course of time, to goad him on towards madness and despair. The enraged musician of Hogarth's delineation is no unimportant illustration of this order; and what with the very incarnation of uproar with which the music-murderers beneath his window torture his senses, no wonder that his angry feelings well-nigh tempt him to bid farewell to his art, and put an end to his existence by cutting his throat with one of his own fiddle-strings.

But let us at once enter upon the experiences which befall the humble author whose sojourn under different roofs is continually being curtailed on account of those noisy interruptions that put an effectual bar to the prosecution of his art. He has taken up his residence in the topmost chamber of a dingy, and peculiarly West-end lodging-house, after receiving the most solemn assurances that no species of disturbance will possibly be encountered. But, alas! on the very first morning he discovers that a fellow-lodger on the same floor bestows three agonizing hours per day in practising the fiddle, or flute, including every variety of scale and exercise, chromatic and rheumatic, to the sacrifice of every gentler feeling in the breast of the angry scribe on the other side of the wall. Under these circumstances, the latter may wisely arrange to take his daily walk to the city during that proscribed period; but only to return weary and footsore, and as unfit for mental toil as the dead. He casts himself upon the bed, resolving to devote the earlier hours of the night to his employment; and rises, refreshed and impatient to begin; when, lo! within an arm's length of his window the harmonious chorus of all the neighbouring cats once more interdict his studies with a vengeance. At length he quits this untenable chamber in search of more congenial apartments. These are apparently soon discovered. In a quiet street, blocked at the further end, and which, at the time of his exploration bears the very perfection of paradisaical retirement, he pitches his tent in anticipation of that quiet in which he stands so much

in need. But what are his feelings—his chamber looking upon the street—as those grinning Italian music-grinders with their mounted pianos follow each other in regular and rapid succession, in their visits to the music-loving inmates of the next house, nor leave the poor author one moment's peace; in addition to which, the very sequestered character of the street invites all the neighbouring children to make it a rendezvous for their uproarious evening gambols. In despair, he gladly pays an extra week's rent to enable him to quit the premises without delay; and takes up his quarters under a roof that harbours not cats, nor flutes, nor fiddles, nor pianos—according to the guarantee of the good dame. But he is not the sole stranger in that house. Exactly over his head is the common living-room of a humble family, of which the noisy children are continually running backwards and forwards to exercise their juvenile limbs; while another family below stairs take pleasure in sending their youngsters into the back-yard (and being the height of summer, the author must endure the torture with open window), who beguile the long hours of the day by shouting, at the top of their shrill voices, to the accompaniment of a short stick brought into contact with a tin plate.

A third time he seeks to benefit by a change of quarters; and during three days or more every indication of his surroundings all but assure him that he has made a happy choice at last. But suddenly the strains of a laboured pianoforte diversion resound through the party wall of the next house, which, from their continuance, completely put to flight every inspired idea that had so lately held possession of his mind. And judge of his angered astonishment when he is informed (as he day by day experiences) that the cause of this annoyance is the sole and beloved daughter of the next house, just returned home for her holidays—*six weeks* probably; and who fails not to practise the full regulation term of eight consecutive hours per day at the most infernal and unmelodious exercises, in preparation for attaining her degree at one of the West End musical academies. True, according to the poet, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast;" nevertheless, the distracted scribe will have none of it, and flies from it as from a pestilence, only, however, to encounter a new experience of the scientific waves of sound. Truth to relate, his next "pitch" lies in the very midst of a piano-manufacturing district; and from his waking hours until evening his ears are involuntarily greeted by the incessant buzz of several saw-mills to the rear of the house; to say nothing of a board-school on the other side of the way, with its characteristic hum and song of some eight or nine hundred juvenile voices the whole day through. Once more he delivers himself from the trammels of a ruinous distraction only to discover a new cause of vexation. The grown-up daughters of the household are as busy as bees in plying their business as dressmakers beneath the family roof, as may be distinguished by the unceasing click-clack of a couple of powerful sewing-machines the live-long day; while the father, a journeyman carpenter by trade, will be sure to devote himself, with a plentiful use of hammer and mallet, to some private job in hand in the evening, until all the good people have retired for the night.

Under another roof, and overlooking, from a top

back window, that ever-interesting prospect of drying spaces and wilderness-looking plots of grounds—misnamed house-gardens—the diverting exercises of carpet-beating and chair-bottom chastising will, in all certainty, form the occupation of each neighbour alternately; not to omit husbands out of work made happy in the knocking together of a home-made dust-bin, or the destruction of ever so many useless packing cases and rotten barrels in the interests of firewood. Then again the evening's expected quiet—so anxiously waited for by the poor author—may be annihilated within doors by the cracked voice of the darling genius of the family to the accompaniment of an equally tuneless instrument, and against which the unhappy lodger strives to close his ears and his chamber door in vain.

His last removal, after due deliberation and care of selection, might appear, from the sworn assertions of the lady of the house, in answer to his inquiries upon each and every head, that he will be troubled with no children, nor sewing-machines, nor flutes, nor fiddles, nor cats, nor pianos, nor carpentry, that he had at length found a veritable haven of peace. Yet, how does he marvel when, a few days after his arrival, the unmistakable tones of a new-born infant—the joint property of a happy young couple in the adjoining chamber—break upon his studies; as also the prolonged bark of a discontented dog somewhere to the rear of the premises, as regularly as his—the dog's—stomach demands to be replenished. Nor can he fail to be interested in the newly-arrived professional corner-player, residing in the same direction as the canine nuisance, whose well-worn practice twice a day, and with the utmost exactitude in regard to the order of his heterogeneous selections, become the wonder and the bane of the entire neighbourhood.

In the end, whilst wearily asking himself, "What have I done to endure this torture?" the unhappy *littérateur* disappears one fine morning mysteriously and permanently, nor is ever heard of again, to the infinite sorrow of his friends, his creditors, and all who knew him. Doubtless his fancy has conceived a delightful vision of that "Quiet Life," amid green pastures and sequestered groves, as pictured by Pope, where

Hours, days, and years glide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day,
Sound sleep by night,

and has betaken himself, in a wild frenzy of anticipated joy, in quest thereof. At any rate, those two essentials for a contented mind, *Peace* and *Quietness*, however attainable in a limited degree in the provinces, are certainly *not* to be commanded in the heart of the greatest, the mightiest, and the wealthiest metropolis in the world.

SCENTS.

VI.

LILACS.

A LOVELY life, sweet-blooming, though dark walls surround each side, she sees the happy sky, And gives her fragrance—strong and sweet—yet shy,
She bends and waves: then as the rain soft falls

Lifts up her head, as one who hears low calls
From lovers voices, who all gently try
To tell one only that they wait near by,
Yet would not break a silence that ne'er falls.
Oh! fragrance, rare and meek: above the stir
And tramp of feet, and rush of horse, of men,
And sound of music all around the square!
How London fades: I scent my southron fir.
I walk with youth and hope at one again,
And life is swift a wondrous gift and fair!

VII.

LILIES OF THE VALLEY.

A PERFECT chime of fairy wedding-bells
Ringing in joyful haste to tell abroad
That summer woos sweet spring: the birds have soared

High into air with bliss: from cool, sweet dells.
Out springs the song, as each small flow'ret tells
The news about: see fair spring greets her lord
And gives him all the sweetness she has stored
Within the fragrance of her honeyed cells!
Ring on, oh! chime, sweet-scented chime of hope,
Within thy bells lie many a faded dream
Dead long ago: dead in my wasted spring.
I kiss thy lips: I have no strength to cope
With life that only held one transient gleam,
Then fell to earth, bird with a broken wing.

J. E. PANTON.

A TIME OF DANGER.

BY PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

CHAPTER III.

AN UNPLEASANT OCCURRENCE.

MY duties at Grove House were anything but irksome; still things needed the superintendence of a man of business, and I was surprised to find what business capacities I had. I had had more than one interview with Mr. Churchill, and he expressed himself satisfied. The cold, hard January led to a warm, moist February—February with soft stir of wind in leafless branches; February with blue, fleecy skies, casual sunshine, and quiet rain. It seemed as if the earth drew breath, and laughed softly, knowing the winter to be really dead; and my heart was at rest within me, for Mr. Clifford had made quite a friend of me; had asked me in the evening sometimes to play cards with him; had questioned me about myself, and discovered that I was engaged to be married, and had seemed quite interested.

My rooms were just in the rear of the hall, and there, sitting in the evening, I would often hear Miss Churchill playing on the organ, and not unfrequently singing to it in that voice of high-pitched sweetness. There was something fascinating in those clear thrilling notes. Mr. Clifford, who rented a small farmhouse near by, seemed to come and go at will; but Miss Churchill always drove out in the afternoon, and the two friends never walked together except in the evening. Sometimes Clifford would present himself in the evening at my rooms, and ask permission to smoke a pipe with me.

"Really, Lechlie," he would say with one of his irresistible smiles—smiles that were like sun-

light—"it's very good of you to let me come and intrude upon your hours of privacy, but it is so dull here for a fellow who like myself has nothing to do."

I suggested that there was plenty to be done in London.

"True," said Clifford, "but I played out London when I was a young man. However, I suppose I shall get up there when the season is in full swing."

Often we talked of books, Clifford showing real knowledge of them. My letters to Grace, at first despondent, became quite cheerful. March came with stormy wind, white foaming seas, and bold blue skies, and after it had passed, and done its work of regeneration, came in the sweet wayward girl-month of the year.

No month, when true to our ideal of it, is, I think, more fascinating than April. How delightful, after stress and strain of the winter, are her outbursts of warm sun! By June, if the season be a fine one, we have become accustomed to it, or tired of it, unless we be veritable salamanders; but in April the sun seems as fresh as the leaves it shines upon. How bewildering are those vehement showers through which the sun laughs all the while; and how good are those unexpected thunderstorms which always remind one of a cavalry regiment in full charge; and in what contrast, and how blessedly restful, are the soft, long, delaying, April twilights! April, why the word itself is enough to move man's heart with love, and because I do love so well this sweet girl-month of the year must my digression be pardoned unto me.

The country all round Grove House looked most enticing. I was as happy as a man may be who is separated from the beloved of his heart. I loved April, not only on its own account, but because it was the birth-month of my sweet Lady Grace. Her birthday was the twentieth, the day falling on Sunday. On the nineteenth I was sent to Kingstown, there to execute some commissions. I procured as good a birthday gift as the place afforded, and desiring the quiet of my own room, whence I could write to her before post time, I engaged a trap, promising to pay the driver well if he drove fast. At such good speed did we come that I effected a saving of nearly an hour, and in an hour one can write a good deal if hand and heart move swiftly together.

It was a warm, wet, windy, wayward afternoon, and as I went down the passage leading to my room it seemed to me as if I heard the door of it close. I had been warned always to keep it locked when I went out, and to take the key with me. Had I been careless enough, in thinking of Grace, to have neglected that precaution? I hurried on, and found, to my great relief, that the door was locked. I unlocked it, and went in, and stood by the window for a little while, watching the commotion of the trees as the wind came hurrying through their newly-green branches. Then I took from an escritoire my account-book. I am, as I have said before, a very methodical person, and I wondered a little to see my account-book topsyturvy. That was what came of my thoughts running so much upon Grace! I entered briefly what I had spent, and then got to the writing of my letter, and for the time was lost to everything else.

In the evening, Mr. Churchill sent for me to

play backgammon with him, as he sometimes had done of late. For him he was almost genial.

I arose the next morning, sad at heart, because I could not be with Grace on her birthday, and yet with a feeling that I ought to be festive because it was her birthday. We were very foolish lovers, always having little fêtes all to ourselves, such as an anniversary of our meeting-day—of the day when we sat together in the June twilight, and for the first time sat hand clasped in hand—the anniversary of the day, coming so shortly after, when I told my love! Then there was her birthday, and my birthday. Our engagement had been a protracted one, as I would not marry till I had enough to maintain my wife as became her position. Once well established at Grove House, and in a proper home of my own, Grace would come to me as my wife.

In my leisure hours, I was writing a novel. If it proved a success we could go to London, and perhaps make a really paying thing of literature. In the meanwhile, this stewardship seemed a refuge and a hope. A long and loving letter from my sweetheart made the day bright. She sent me some violets which she had worn the day before in the bosom of her dress. She said she meant to be cheerful on her birthday, though she had to spend it away from me, and that I must be cheerful too. Her intimate girl friend was coming to dine with them, and they were going to have her favourite sweets, and so, between grave and gay, ran on the letter to its loving and lovely termination.

I had purchased myself, the day before in Kingstown, a half bottle of champagne in which to drink my love's health, and when the time came for my early dinner (I was getting accustomed to early dinners), I drank to our happiness and our speedy meeting! Then I went to do some business on the estate. It was about six in the evening when I again came within sight of the house. As I passed down one of the many terraces which lay all round it, I came upon Miss Churchill and Mr. Clifford, who were pacing to and fro, evidently engaged in earnest conversation. I said, "Good evening!" and lingered to make a few observations about the business I had transacted. Was it only my fancy that their manner, generally so friendly, was cold and constrained? And why should it be? As far as I knew there was nothing with which I had to reproach myself. Still, when I bade them good evening, they made no attempt to detain me as I had often known them do before. I went to my room with an uneasy sense of something wrong, but what? I could not know; and a great wave of unhappiness, really disproportional to what had caused it, swept over me. I thought of my darling so far away, and it seemed as if an unbridgable gulf were opening between us. I sat looking stupidly at the trees swaying in the wind. Then I began a letter to Grace, to see if I could not write off a little of the depression which had so overwhelmed me. I was glad when it seemed time to go to bed, though when in bed I slept but little. The next day the sense of something wrong still weighed upon me. It was about twelve in the afternoon when a servant informed me that Miss Churchill wished to speak to me in the library, whither I repaired, glad to have the opportunity of again observing her manner. She looked very stately and composed, sitting in

a low chair by the fire, her hands clasped on her knees.

"Good afternoon," she said, still, as I thought, very coldly.

There was a pause, after which she resumed, speaking swiftly as one who would get quickly over an unpleasant subject.

"I am sorry, Mr. Lechlie, to say anything which may strike you as unpleasant; but you must for the future please be a little more accurate in your accounts. My uncle likes to go through the form of looking over your books monthly; but I first go over them very carefully, and I find you have made three or four mistakes in several cases, which I will point out to you. You have set down the price of articles ordered by you at a higher figure than I know they amount to."

I was about to protest, when she said—

"But I will show you," and she produced one of my account books, and there I did see, set down in my own handwriting, certain articles for which I knew then I must have paid too much. Of course dishonest shopkeepers would not appreciate me of my mistake.

I glanced through the book, and saw that I had altogether paid about two pounds in excess. I confessed my culpable carelessness, promised that everything should be right in the future, and begged to be allowed to return the money I had lost. The offer was accepted with a gracious smile, and a cloud seemed to vanish from between us.

So *that* was the trouble! I thought, as I went to my duties with a lighter heart. If I had been careless in the past, I would be careful enough in the future, for I had no desire to leave Grove House—not, at least, till I saw my way clearly ahead.

So April passed over, and May came, with May-like grey skies and shrill east winds, tearing at the young shrubs savagely, and making one forecast winter again. But it passed, and bright, brilliant June weather made amends for it; and though I was away from Grace, I could not resist the sense of exhilaration which brilliant sunshine and sun-saturated air always begets in me. What makes other people languid only stimulates me. I riot in summer, when it is summer really. There were larks singing like mad by day, and by night, nightingales giving their souls away in music to the moonlighted air. It was my first experience of nightingales, and it was a memorable one. It was the London season, and tidings came from Grace of dances, afternoon receptions, water-pics, garden parties, and all that giddy whirl which constitutes the great London season. I often thought of those hot, crowded rooms, where my darling would be, as I loitered about the grounds in the evening, inhaling the pure flower-scented air, or later on, when the house was closed for the night, leaning from my window into the moonlight, listening to the nightingales as their music gushed out upon the air, and my darling in her way was happy; for though she was no flirt, she loved to be admired, as every woman should, and admired she always was. And I knew that when she had come home, and put off her pretty dress, fragrant with the real flowers she always chose to wear, and had let her hair down over those white, beautifully shaped shoulders, her thoughts would turn to me, and that when she lay down her last

thought would be of me. Such complete faith as we had in one another does not, I think, often exist between lovers, and anything like jealousy was unknown between us, but on the blessed fact of our love and our entire unity I must not linger any longer.

The first of July was one of our festive days, for it was the day on which we had first met. I arose, as I had arisen on the anniversary of Grace's birthday, with a sad feeling that we could not pass the day together, yet knowing that I ought to be festive, because on this day two years ago had come to me the great blessing of my life. That first of July, and the day to which I have just alluded, were days to be ever memorable in my life. This was a day of veiled sunlight and of intense heat—a day of heavy, brooding, undelightful heat; a day in which you know that the flowers pine and languish for rain; a day when sound travels far, and everything is dreadfully still.

Mr. Churchill was confined to his bed with a bad attack of gout.

The night before, his niece being from home, passing the evening at a neighbour's, he had asked me if I would mind reading him to sleep? I said I would do my best, and after some time succeeded in accomplishing the desired result. I was still sitting beside him, thinking of Grace, when the door opened softly, and Miss Churchill came in.

It was the first time I had seen her in evening-dress, and I saw then how superb were her arms and shoulders. She stood close by me, and gazed down on the sleeper's face.

After lingering about the room for two or three minutes, she said in a low whisper—

"I think we can leave him now. Should he want anything, he has but to call to Martin, who sleeps in the dressing-room (Martin was Mr. Churchill's valet). Good night." And she left the room swiftly.

I followed in a few minutes, but after I had been in bed some time, it seemed to me as if I heard a sound as of stealthy footsteps, and of doors opening and shutting gently. Miss Churchill had told me once with a laugh that the house was supposed to be haunted. I wondered if this were really the case, and unquiet ghosts came by night to revisit scenes of old disaster? I am not a nervous man, but the idea had taken hold of me, and it was long before I could get to sleep. Indeed, the birds were beginning to have conjectures on the subject of dawn when at last my eyes closed, and I fell into a dream of Grace, and awoke suddenly with her name upon my lips.

I arose early, feeling dreadfully shaken and unstrung. The weather had undoubtedly much to say for it. I shall never forget the dark, brooding, unwholesome heat of that July day; not one bird had got heart to sing. I thought of Grace, and how we had met. My own face seen in the glass startled me, it looked so pale and worn. I hoped I was not going to be ill. After a pretext of a breakfast, I went about my duties. Just as the clock was striking twelve a servant came and told me that Miss Churchill wished to speak with me. She was in the red room, that was her own especial sitting-room, in which I had my first interview with her.

I went, remembering a previous time she had

wished to speak to me, and I confess my heart misgave me a little as I traversed the long passages leading to the red room. The humid heat came in at the open windows with heavy scent of flowers. It was as if Nature had been stricken by some strange sickness. A few minutes more, and I was in Miss Churchill's presence. She wore a dress of some soft blue material in which she looked beautifully cool and pure; indeed, to look at her as she sat there was refreshment. She greeted me almost warmly, yet seemed, I thought, a little ill at ease. She remarked that I looked far from well. I replied that I had slept badly, and did not feel in my usual health. Then she began quite suddenly—

"Mr. Lechlie, something very unpleasant has happened. It will be very unpleasant for the servants; and to make it not too painful, we must take our part with them. Of course, in our case it will be but a matter of form, as you will see when I have explained. Briefly, then, what has happened is this. My uncle has missed a very valuable diamond ring. He removed it from his finger when swelling with gout, and it lay on his dressing-table with his watch and chain. A very careless thing to do! but he always was careless with such things. He is now in a state of wild anger. A detective has been sent for, and he will make a rigorous examination. This room and my bedroom will be as carefully searched as any of the others; so you will not be hurt at your rooms being similarly dealt with."

"Indeed, no," I said; adding how sorry I was to hear of the loss, and that I had often noticed and admired the ring. Then a servant announced that Mr. Maythorpe was waiting in the library. Mr. Maythorpe was the detective. I returned to my own rooms to wait till I should be summoned. I had to wait a long time as the examination seemed to be a very thorough one. I got out paper and pen, and began a letter to my far-away sweetheart, telling her what had happened. I had left this subject, however, and was deep in reminiscences of the past when my summons to appear came. I had just written—

"On that day, two years ago to-day, when I first saw you, saw you in your fresh flower-like beauty, with roses in hair and bosom, I said instantly to myself—

My love is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
My love is like a melody
That's sweetly played in tune."

I laid aside my letter, and went to the library. Mr. Maythorpe was quite unlike what I had imagined a detective would be. He was a slight man with rather hollow cheeks and melancholy eyes. He had a languid air, as one who thinks his great qualities are being wasted.

"Your name is Lechlie?" he began; "and I believe you are Mr. Churchill's steward?"

I replied that on both points he was correct. He then asked me when I had last seen Mr. Churchill. I answered, "About half-past eleven on the previous night." "I had heard of his having missed a diamond ring." "I had not noticed it the night before, but I had often noticed it on Mr. Churchill's hand."

He had no more questions to ask me, of which I was glad. He supposed I had no objection to his

looking over my rooms? None at all. So we set out in state to examine the apartments I temporarily occupied. The sitting-room was furnished abundantly with receptacles for papers. These Mr. Maythorpe languidly inspected. I then handed him my keys, pointing out which one opened a large old-fashioned escritoire, which stood between the windows, where I kept my account books and the money with which I was entrusted. He opened it, turned over the books, examined the drawers, and asked if I knew of any secret drawer.

I said I did not.

He hesitated for a moment, as if wondering whether something were worth while or not. Then he removed each drawer, and putting his hand into the space thus created, tapped with his finger all round. When he came to the last cavity but one, he was longer; then there was a sudden click, and a narrow drawer shot half way out of the panel. He pulled it out completely; he put his finger and thumb in, and drew out—what but the missing diamond ring?

(To be continued.)

SUMMER WILD FLOWERS.

BY CHARLES WORTHE.

THE great wood stretches up the gradual slope of the hill far away into the distance, and stands the centre of a great silence, basking in the summer sun. The birds have sought the refuge of its grateful shade, and the only one that occasionally breaks the monotonous quietude is the green woodpecker, with his yuk-yuk! There is everywhere, however, the hum of both idle and busy insects; it never appears to be too hot for them, as they dance in the air or flit from flower to flower.

We have recently been staying in the village that nestles in a hollow at the foot of the great wood; but as the game in this wood is strictly preserved, we have restrained a strong desire to wander in and about it, fearing to vex the soul of "keeper," who by no means appreciates a taste for botany, nor anything else for the matter of that, if pursued among his preserves. We sometimes walked along some of the rides, and gathered great bunches of the wild honeysuckle which was entwined around the young wood, the best blooms being at the top, quite out of reach; but these walks along beaten tracks by no means satisfied our craving for the "pathless woods." What we longed for was to penetrate through the tangled brushwood, or to tramp through the ferns under the big trees, and revel in the luxury of wildness.

The honeysuckle, by the way, or, as it is sometimes called, the woodbine, is one of those plants which has been credited with showing what is called "perceptive power." In the ordinary way, the branches grow out from the parent stem, and twine round the first support they meet from right to left. But should they fail to find that support, two branches will mutually support each other, one twining from right to left, the other from left to right. We have noticed this several times, and know it to be correct. Every one knows the delightful fragrance of the wild

honeysuckle, which is not equalled by any of the foreign varieties that are frequently planted in shrubberies. The most beautiful of all to the eye is the coral honeysuckle from America, with its large flowers, red on the outside and scarlet within; but, like many other American flowers, it is quite destitute of scent.

Fortunately, the quantity and variety of the wild flowers in bloom at the present season in the meadows and fields in a great measure compensated us for our self-denial in keeping out of the woods. We met "velveteens" on several occasions during our rambles, and always with a gun across his arm. We had several long talks with him about birds and animals, and found that, though well acquainted with the names of birds, and able to distinguish each species on the wing, he was as profoundly ignorant of the habits of many of them as the most veritable Cockney, and often, where he had formed an idea respecting them, he was totally wrong. His one and almost only idea seemed to be to keep the pheasants in the wood undisturbed; everything else was looked upon as "varmin," to be shot or trapped. To him a hawk was a hawk, to be shot down at every opportunity. It was utterly useless to try to impress him with the fact that there were some hawks whose food consisted entirely of mice, beetles, and such small deer, and never touched other birds; hawks were "varmin," and must be shot. It is to such men as these, with a thirst for slaughter and the opportunity of gratifying it, that we owe the almost total extinction of many valuable birds. And yet he was by no means what you would call an ignorant man, but appeared to possess an average amount of intelligence, such knowledge as he possessed being the result of his own unaided laborious thought and observation, and not gained from books. As he said, "I often sits in the wood and thinks for an hour or two at a time." We confess that his opportunity of doing this raised a feeling of envy in our breast.

But let us take note of a few of the flowers we saw in our rambles. We start from the house for a long walk across the meadows and by corn-fields, and have at first to keep to the roadway, some little distance—the typical country road, which appears originally to have been laid out with an eye to contingencies—for there is a broad strip of green sward on either side quite as wide as the actual roadway, bounded by a bank topped by a thick old hedge. Over this was growing various creepers, conspicuous among them being the wild clematis, or traveller's joy, with its delicate white blossoms. It may probably have received the latter name from its pretty appearance on the hedges, and the joy the sight of it would afford the tired wayfarer along the dusty highroad. It is rather singular that this should be the only species of clematis which grows wild in this country; those grown in our gardens are natives of more southern climes. Another creeper which is plentiful in all our hedgerows is the bryony, sometimes called the red-berried bryony to distinguish it from another bryony which has nearly black berries. It is unfortunate there should be two plants, both climbers, and both growing in our hedgerows, of the same name, as it sometimes creates confusion, though the two plants are quite distinct and belong to different orders. The red-berried bryony is much like the

vine in its growth, with its tendrils, insignificant flowers, and bunches of red berries. The other has large heart-shaped, glossy leaves, and its stem twines round its support. The name bryony only means to shoot out, in allusion to its rapid growth, and though it is applicable to both these plants, it is also equally applicable to many others. The flowers of both these species are almost unnoticeable, but the berries are large and poisonous. Growing alongside it is another plant, the black berries of which are generally credited with being poisonous; this is the woody-nightshade, or bitter-sweet, with its pretty pendent purple flowers on their long slender stalks, which are too fragile to stand alone, so that it is always found growing through some bush which protects it from the wind. This must not be mistaken for the deadly nightshade, which is a very different plant of the same order and is but rarely met with in hedgerows, but on the sides of old chalkpits or among ruined walls. It has reddish purple-coloured bell-shaped flowers, which are succeeded by most luscious-looking black berries of a sweetish taste: hence the danger to children. It is altogether a very handsome-looking plant, and one that we should much like to see growing in our wild-flower garden, but the responsibility would be too great. We often wonder that many of our wild-flowers are not more cultivated in our gardens; several of them have beauty of a high order, and with suitable soil would flourish and keep their ground without any special attention. The graceful and delicate little harebells are in full bloom along the banks by the wayside, and very charming they look, bowing their heads to every gentle zephyr that passes. Higher up is the wild convolvulus—the lesser bindweed we mean—with the pink and white blossoms, not the large white one, the gardener's especial hatred. Above all, near the top, is the beautiful toad-flax, with its yellow and orange blossoms, sometimes incorrectly called the wild snap-dragon. The flowers are certainly very like those of the antirrhinum or snapdragon, and when pressed at the side disclose a large mouth, but there is an addition of what we might fancy to be a pointed beard, which is altogether absent in the garden species. Covering the ground around is the purple-flowered ground ivy, which, by the way, is not an ivy at all. This name, like many other of our English names, has been given from its fancied resemblance to the ivy. It happens that in this case the scientific name is still more obscure (*Nepeta glechoma*). Some writers trace it to one thing, some to another. The generic name is most probably from *nepa*, a scorpion, though whence the connection rises we cannot pretend to offer an explanation.

Where a narrow lane branches off from our main road there is a large piece of waste land which is one mass of golden bloom. This is the tansy, which has a strong aromatic smell; the young leaves are sometimes used with omelettes, and the good housewives of yore were very fond of making tansy-tea, which we imagine must have been like most other decoctions of the olden time, whose chief merit consisted in being extremely nauseous. There are some curious customs connected with tansy-cakes and tansy-puddings in the West of England at Easter-time, still lingering in some out-of-the-world places. It is easy to imagine that these cakes are not particularly nice,

as they are intended to represent the bitter herbs at the Paschal feast.

On a piece of waste land, just within a gate opening on a field, where probably a manure-heap has stood at some time or other, a profusion of the common mallows, with their mauve-coloured flowers, are growing luxuriantly, some to the height of about five feet. Country folks often call this the marsh mallow, which is quite another plant. Children, in allusion to their shape, call the seed-pods cheeses, and eat them freely. Our garden hollyhock is but a cultivated mallow.

As we approach our wood, we can hear the soft cooing note of the wood-pigeon, and the still more melancholy note of the turtle-dove, of which there are great numbers in this district during the summer. We will not, however, be allured in that direction, but will take the opposite road, which we can soon leave for a by-path that will lead us into the moist meadows in the valley. Through this runs a stream winding in most fantastic shapes, fringed by a growth of alders and a wealth of wild flowers, now in all their summer glory. In winter or spring, after heavy rains, this stream frequently bursts its bounds, and strays far over the adjoining meadows; now it is in some places but a tiny rivulet, in others it widens into large pools. There is a path by the side, and we will follow its windings for a time. The first flowers which attract us by their abundance are the yellow and purple loose-strife, which appear to flourish here exceedingly, some of them growing to more than three feet high. This is another instance where two plants, totally different, botanically, have been given the same name, and to distinguish them it is necessary to particularize the colour. The yellow is the loose-strife proper—the origin of the name is somewhat doubtful, but it is probably from the Greek of which the generic name is compounded, meaning to dissolve strife—and as another conspicuous plant, growing to about the same height is nearly always found with it, that was considered a good and sufficient reason by old herbalists to call it purple loose-strife.

The great willow herb, with its dark pink blossom borne upon the end of the seed-pod, which is a characteristic of the species, is also plentiful amongst the tangled mass of greenery by the water's edge.

Plash! there goes a water-rat, that was probably eating some of the water-plaintain, which is growing in this pool. Our readers are of course aware that this is not a rat at all, is purely a vegetable feeder, and quite harmless. Although not web-footed, it swims and dives with great ease and swiftness. The correct name is the water-vole, and there are several much larger species found in America.

Now we come to a part of the stream where the banks are higher, and there is less rank vegetation; but in its place there is a quantity of the turquoise blue of the forget-me-not, which suggests all sorts of poetical and legendary anecdotes; and the golden stars of the rag-wort. But growing in profusion all over one side of the bank, its deep yellow flowers in full bloom, is a plant that may often be seen struggling to grow amid the smoke and sunless gloom on many a window-sill in Seven Dials and Bethnal Green. It appears to be a great favourite with Londoners everywhere. In many a grand villa garden, even hanging in a thick

cluster from the window boxes may be seen the long tendrils and golden blossoms of the money-wort, known to most people by the name of creeping Jenny.

But let us leave the damp meadows, though there is always a charm and attraction by running water, climb the hill on the other side by yonder hedgerow and so on to the cornfields. Of all the situations favoured by our favourite wild flowers, none can compare for brilliancy of colouring to the cornfields. Neither hedgerows nor meadows can compete with them in intensity of colour, for here we have the primary colours, the beautiful blue of the corn-flower, the flaming scarlet of the poppy, and the golden yellow of the corn marigold. The two last may be seen growing sometimes in other situations, but the corn-flower remains faithful to its name, and scarcely any cornfield but would yield specimens of it. When all three are present in great numbers they are sure indications of bad farming, but to the uninitiated who knows nor cares for none of these things, they are looked upon as floral beauties and attractions only. Fancy a cornfield without a scarlet poppy! half its charm to the eye would be lost. The pretty pale scarlet flowers of the pimpernel are conspicuous among the corn by reason of its being almost the only flower that we have of that colour. The yellow charlock—charlick the natives call it, the farmer's curse—is growing in abundance in some of the fields, so much so, that at a distance it appears to be the only crop. There is another blue flower, of which there is a great quantity about here, and which we think as pretty in its way as the corn-flower. It is of a much paler and more delicate colour, and is pretty enough to ornament any garden, but it requires a light chalky soil; the country people call it succory, but it is really the wild chicory.

Did space permit we could increase our list of summer flowers quite ten-fold, each with its little peculiarities, and its little history; those we have noted have been perhaps the most striking, and consequently those with which we are all most familiar. Having taken our fill of the pure air that sweeps over the hill, and brings with it a smell of the sea; having enjoyed our walk and the great silence around us, we will turn our steps homeward, and take a short cut across this cat stubble where the oats are piled in shocks. Near one of the largest stacks of sheaves, we surprised a hen partridge, with a numerous covey of little ones not more than a fortnight old, an unusual circumstance at this season of the year: the first nest was most probably destroyed.

To-morrow we must leave this quietude, and return to the busy, noisy town; but no matter how much we may be immersed in business cares, Nature has such a strong hold on our heart that the memory of what we have seen will dwell with us and cheer us never to be forgotten.

And, when the stream
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
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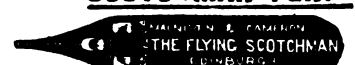
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